

Chapter 8

The Transcontinental Railroad, Moving Out West

U.S. HISTORY FOCUS

FASCINATING FACTS: The Pony Express

The primary mission of the Pony Express was to deliver news and mail on horseback as quickly as possible between its eastern terminal at St. Joseph, Missouri and its western terminal at Sacramento, California. The distance between these terminals was about 2,000 miles, and the Pony Express usually covered it in about ten days. The Pony Express was in service for just 2 years, 1860 and 1861; but during those two years it became a memorable symbol of the American West.

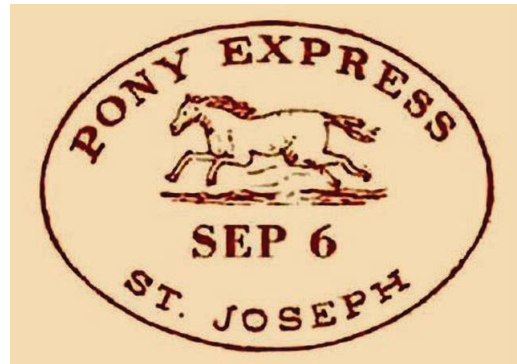
When the State of California entered the Union in 1850, it was cut off from the eastern half of the nation by a wide, largely unknown expanse of land filled with natural barriers and often hostile Indians. Instead of crossing to California overland, many travelers:

1. Traveled by boat down the east coast of North America and across the Gulf of Mexico to Panama or Nicaragua, where they
2. Crossed Central America at its narrowest point overland (by rail after 1855), and then
3. Caught another boat up the west coast of North America to California.

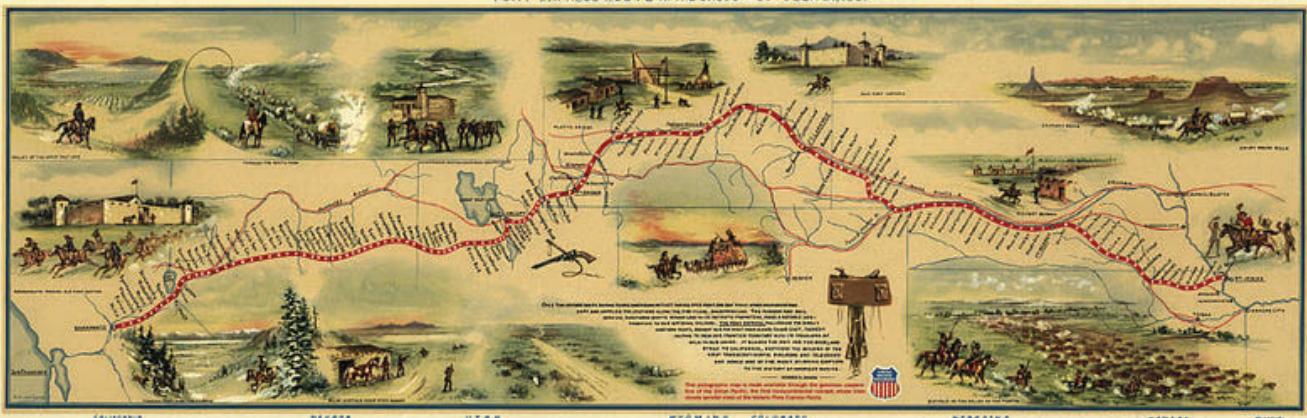
This journey could take months; but the people of California and the West needed news and letters from back east quickly. To answer this need, three businessmen created the Pony Express, hoping that they would receive a contract from the U.S. Post Office to deliver mail across country to and from California. As it turned out, they never won that contract.

When the Pony Express agency first went into operation, it purchased about six hundred fast, tough horses and hired about seventy-five qualified riders. Each rider could weigh no more than 110 pounds and was required to be:

1. An excellent horseman,
2. Brave,
3. Able to shoot from horseback and
4. Willing to fight Indians when necessary.



PONY EXPRESS ROUTE APRIL 3, 1860 - OCTOBER 24, 1861



The Pony Express agency established about 190 stations stocked with fresh horses and supplies along the route from St. Joseph to Sacramento, which followed trails blazed by the pioneers. Over good terrain, each rider covered a 60-mile leg of the trip in 6 hours on 6 different horses. Riding at a gallop, a rider would cover about ten miles, change horses, and then cover another ten miles, making an average of 10 miles per hour. Over mountain terrain, of course, each mile took longer.

Other interesting facts about the Pony Express:

- Pony Express mail was expensive. A single half-ounce letter cost \$5 to deliver, about \$120 in 2010 dollars.
- The best-known Pony Express rider was William Cody, later known as Buffalo Bill.
- The Pony Express closed two days after the completion of the first Transcontinental Telegraph on October 24, 1861.

FASCINATING FACTS: Early Railroads

From as early as 1550, German road builders created “wagon ways” to speed travel for horse-drawn wagons. Wagonways were wooden rails laid down to guide and bear the weight of wagons loaded down with coal or ore. Wagonways allowed horses to do their work far more easily, without the constant danger of becoming stuck on muddy roads. By the late 1700s, as the Industrial Revolution was getting underway, iron rails had begun to replace wooden rails on wagonways.



Other interesting facts about early railroads:

- The first working commercial steam locomotive appeared in Britain in 1804.
- The first American-built steam locomotive was the 1829 *Tom Thumb*, which malfunctioned and lost a race against a horse-drawn rail car on its maiden run. Even though it lost, the *Tom Thumb* was still fast and powerful enough to convince the owners of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad that steam locomotives would soon replace horses.
- By the 1850s, steam locomotives and railroads had spread all over the eastern United States, and they were critically important during the 1861 - 1865 Civil War.
- The Pullman Company built the first luxury sleeping cars in the late 1850s.
- A Pullman car carried President Lincoln’s remains on a tour of Northern states after his assassination in 1865.

The Transcontinental Railroad

The Mexican-American War (1846 - 1848) and the California Gold Rush (1849) combined to make settling and governing California urgent matters for the United States. In an effort to bypass the issue of banning slavery in the proposed California Territory, President Zachary Taylor decided to skip territory status for California and bring it directly into the Union as a State. California became a free State as part of the Compromise of 1850, shortly after President Taylor’s death.

But California was divided from the eastern United States by a wide, often treacherous expanse of land filled with natural barriers and hostile Indians. The journey across this “Great American Desert” by wagon train required months, and the water route around South America or across Panama often required just as long. The United States needed a way to unite its two halves. The Transcontinental Railroad, completed in 1869, would bridge the gap between East and West and become the key to the nation’s westward expansion.



In 1862, the Pacific Railway Act encouraged private companies to build the Transcontinental Railroad by offering them government bonds (loans) and land grants for each mile of track they completed. Two companies jumped at the opportunity:

1. The **Central Pacific Railroad Company**, which would lay track eastward from Sacramento, California, and
2. The **Union Pacific Railroad Company**, which would lay track westward from Omaha, Nebraska.

At first, the Civil War delayed the Transcontinental Railroad's progress in the East, while difficult terrain and supply problems delayed its progress in the West.



The Transcontinental Railroad was a prodigious feat of engineering. Its 1800-mile length covered two-thirds of the North American continent's width, across every type of terrain imaginable. The only settlement of any size along the entire route was Salt Lake City, founded by the Mormons in 1847 after the Mormon Exodus. The eastern part of the route followed the Platte River valley west from Omaha, just as the Oregon Trail (see Chapter 14) and the Pony Express had done.

The Union Pacific's section of the Transcontinental Railroad was relatively easy. Trains from the east could deliver rails and supplies along the track as the railroad progressed westward. On the High Plains of Nebraska and Wyoming, the ground beneath the track required little preparation at all: the railroad workers could simply lay down the railroad ties, spike the rails to the ties, and move along. As the track approached completion, the Union Pacific had grown so skillful that it needed only twelve hours to lay about ten miles of rails across the easy terrain of the High Plains.

The Central Pacific's section of the railroad was far more difficult. The only supplies the Central Pacific could buy on its end of the line were wooden railroad ties, most of which were cut from California redwood trees. Everything else, from rails and spikes to locomotives, had to be shipped from the east coast by way of Panama or South America. The Central Pacific also faced the extremely difficult terrain of the Sierra Nevada and Rocky mountain ranges, with altitudes up to 8,000 feet, steep grades and mountain snows.

The amount of labor the Central Pacific side of the railroad required was almost beyond imagination. The Central Pacific hired more than ten thousand laborers, many of them from China, to perform the fantastic work of:

1. Carving roads into steep mountainsides and building numerous bridges;
2. Using sledgehammers and dynamite to create 15 tunnels through mountainsides of solid granite, sometimes tunneling from both ends at once; and
3. Building sheds over 37 miles of the route so that they could work through the winter snows.

The Union Pacific and the Central Pacific railroads met and completed their railroad at Promontory Summit, Utah on May 10, 1869. The final spike, made of solid gold, was engraved with these words:

- On top: "The LAST SPIKE"
- On one side: "The Pacific Railroad ground broken Jan. 8th 1863 and completed May 8th 1869"
- On the other side: "May God continue the unity of our Country as this Railroad unites the two great Oceans of the world."



The other two sides were engraved with the names of the railroad companies' heads. Soon after the heads of the Central Pacific and the Union Pacific drove this ceremonial spike, real railroad workers removed it and replaced with an iron one, and the Transcontinental Railroad was finally open for business. The cross country trip that had once required months could now be accomplished in less than five days.

Other interesting facts about the Transcontinental Railroad:

- The president of the Central Pacific Railroad was Leland Stanford, a governor of California and the founder of California's Stanford University.
- The two railroads' joining ceremony had been scheduled for May 8, 1869, the date engraved on the golden spike. After the spike was engraved, however, unforeseen circumstances delayed the ceremony: the unpaid railroad workers of the Union Pacific Company kidnapped their boss, Thomas Durant, and held him for ransom for two days until the company wired him the money he owed them.

FASCINATING FACTS: Buffalo

Before American settlers began to move into the West, uncounted hordes of buffalo, perhaps 50 million or more, roamed the Great Plains in herds. American Indian tribes such as the Arapaho, the Cheyenne, the Kiowa and the Shoshone used buffalo as their primary sustenance. They used buffalo meat, fat, hides, bones, sinews, horns and hooves to make nearly everything they needed to live. Before these tribes gained horses, they sometimes killed buffalo by driving them into a stampede that led the herd over a cliff. After they gained horses, they shot buffalo with bow and arrow from horseback.



This way of life rapidly came to an end after the American settlers began to move west. To the settlers, the buffalo were inconvenient because:

1. Buffalo sustained the American Indian tribes, whom the settlers wanted to remove from the plains and force onto Indian “reservations”;
2. Buffalo herds stood on railroad tracks, blocking the trains and refusing to move; and
3. Buffalo herds ate prairie grass that cattlemen wanted for their cattle.

For a short time, American settlers found that the buffalo were valuable and easy to kill. Buffalo presented a money-making opportunity that was hard to ignore: buffalo skins sold for \$3 or more apiece, while a laborer putting in a long, hard day’s work on the Transcontinental Railroad earned only about \$1 (less if he was Chinese).

For some reason, gunfire rarely caused buffalo herds to stampede. Careful hunters could kill one buffalo after another without frightening the herd. Eventually, the herd would catch on to the threat and run off; and then the hunter’s skinning crew would move in and pull off the dead buffalos’ hides using teams of horses or mules. When the skinners were finished, every part of the buffalo except the hide lay wasted on the plain.

The American settlers’ extravagant overuse of the buffalo could not last long. The buffalo herds were large enough to sustain the American Indian population, but nowhere near large enough to sustain the American settler population. During the twenty years from 1869 - 1889, American settlers hunted the buffalo until they were nearly extinct.

Other interesting facts about buffalo:

- Union General Phil Sheridan, who became an Indian fighter after the Civil War, asked Congress to eliminate the buffalo so that it would be easier for the U.S. Army to drive the American Indian tribes onto their reservations.
- Railroad companies sometimes encouraged their bored passengers to shoot buffalo from moving trains, hoping to eliminate the herds in order to keep their tracks clear and their trains on time.
- Two buffalo hunters who went on to later fame were Buffalo Bill Cody and Wyatt Earp.

MOVING OUT WEST

After the U.S. Civil War, the rush to settle the American West began. Both the U.S. government and the settlers were excited about Western settlement:

1. The U.S. government was eager to settle the American West because it knew that the best way to claim and hold Western territory was to fill it with loyal U.S. citizens.
2. The settlers were eager to settle the American West because of the fantastic opportunity it offered poorer Americans. The Homestead Act of 1862 (see below) made the American West just about the only land anywhere in the world that one didn’t need to be wealthy to claim.

Newspapermen like Horace Greeley, editor of the New York Tribune, advised the Americans of their day to take advantage of these opportunities: “Go West, young man,” Greeley said in 1865, “Go West, and grow up with the country!” An economic depression during Reconstruction (the Depression of 1873) made settlers all the more eager to seek new lands and opportunities out West.

FASCINATING FACTS: The Homestead Act

The Homestead Act of 1862 was designed to encourage settlers to take possession of land in the American West. Under the terms of the Homestead Act, all settlers, including women and freed slaves, were entitled to up to 160 acres



of undeveloped land if they could meet four conditions:

1. They must pay a fee of \$10;
2. They must live on their new land for five years;
3. They must “improve” their new land, usually by building a house and/or a barn on it; and
4. They must file their claim with the U.S. Land Office to receive a title of ownership.

160 acres of land was equal to one “quarter section,” or one fourth of a square mile. Much of the American Midwest is still visibly divided into the one-square-mile “sections” that surveyors laid out because of the Homestead Act.

Oklahoma Land Runs

From 1889-1895, the U.S. Land Office conducted “Land Runs” to distribute some of the Midwest’s last unsettled territories to homesteaders. Most of these unsettled territories were parts of Oklahoma that had been set aside for American Indian tribes during the 1830s, but never occupied.

Before the Land Office began its land runs, two types of people occupied parts of these unsettled Oklahoma lands:

1. Cattlemen who grazed their herds there, renting the land from the American Indian tribes who still technically owned it; and
2. “Squatters” who snuck onto the land, quietly building small homes and raising crops there. The squatters of Oklahoma hoped to take possession of their illegal land claims someday by “squatter’s rights,” unwritten laws that sometimes allow the person who inhabits and uses a piece of land to become that land’s owner.

When the U.S. Land Office planned its land runs, it deliberately ignored “squatter’s rights.” Instead, it removed all squatters from the unsettled lands so that they became a clean slate, a “no man’s land” where no one was allowed to live. Then it announced a fixed date and time when the unsettled lands would be opened to settlement. On the announced date of a land run, hopeful settlers lined up at the unsettled land’s border, ready to race each other to stake their claims on the best quarter sections they could find.



The Land Run of 1889 was the Land Office’s first official land run. On April 22, 1889, about 50,000 settlers gathered on the borders of the unsettled lands that would soon become six counties in Oklahoma. The U.S. Army was on hand to make sure that no one crossed the borders early. At high noon, a starting gun fired, and those 50,000 settlers rushed to claim the 12,500 quarter sections of land that the Land Office had surveyed for them. Obviously, only one quarter of the settlers were satisfied, and three quarters of them were disappointed. The successful settlers in the Land Run of 1889 established and laid out two towns, Oklahoma City and Guthrie, within a single afternoon on April 22.

The largest land run was the September 16, 1893 Cherokee Strip Land Run, which distributed about 7 million acres of land in Oklahoma’s Cherokee Strip. About 100,000 men, women and children, most of them riding horses, wagons or trains, waited for a starter’s shot before racing each other to claim about 42,000 quarter sections of available land.

The Land Runs made two types of people famous:

1. **The Boomers**, settlers who drummed up the public's excitement about the unsettled Indian lands and pressured Congress to open the lands for settlement; and
2. **The Sooners**, settlers who cheated on the Land Runs by arriving "sooner" than everyone else. Oklahoma's Sooners (1) secretly crossed the border into the unsettled lands before the land run began, then (2) jumped out of hiding at the right moment and staked their claims before the unlucky settlers who had naively obeyed the rules could arrive. Some Sooners were U.S. Marshals (law officers) who took their jobs as marshals precisely because these jobs allowed them to spy out all of Oklahoma's best land before the land runs began, in territory that was closed to everyone else. The State of Oklahoma honored the opportunism and dubious honesty of the Sooners by adopting "The Sooner State" as its nickname.

Cattle Drives

The treeless plains of Texas and the Midwest were as good for cattle as they were for buffalo; but in the early 1800s, Texas cattlemen had no way to transport large cattle herds to market. Some drove their cattle to California to feed the people of the California Gold Rush, but that was a long and difficult journey.

After the Civil War, when beef prices began climbing steadily, Texas cattlemen began to take advantage of the railroads in Kansas to ship their cattle to the vast markets of the East. To accomplish this, they hired teams of cowboys to drive their herds over the long miles from Texas to Kansas.

Cattle driving teams consisted of about a dozen men, including a trail boss, a cook, several drovers to keep the cattle moving and a couple of wranglers to manage the team's horses. They loaded all of their equipment and supplies aboard a chuck wagon specially designed for cattle drives, then drove their herds from Texas to the railroad at Abilene, Kansas along the Chisholm Trail. At a pace of 10- 15 miles per day, cattle drivers could complete a cattle drive in 1-3 months.

These cattle drivers were the storied cowboys of the American West, men who tasted freedom as few ever have on the boundless, open Midwestern plains of the mid- to late-1800s.

Like the Pony Express and the land runs, these cattle drives lasted for only a short span of years. The arrival of railroads in Texas rendered long cattle drives unnecessary, and they dwindled during the 1880s.

The Fence Cutting War

Texas cattle drivers grew accustomed to the "open range," the nearly limitless free land on which they could graze their cattle wherever they found grass and water. However, as more settlers moved into Texas, more land was claimed by ranchers who wanted to save their land for their own herds and crops. With the arrival of Joseph Glidden's newly-invented barbed wire, patented in 1874, these ranchers found an inexpensive way to build the miles-long fences they needed to protect their Texas-sized ranches. The ranchers' barbed wire fences prevented crop-trampling, grass-stealing cattle herds from crossing their land, and were a major obstacle to open range cattlemen.

The conflict between open range cattlemen and closed ranchers led to the Fence Cutting War of 1883-1884. The ranchers claimed that they built fences only to protect their private property, which was their right. The open range cattlemen claimed that ranchers were fencing in not only their own land, but also public lands that didn't belong to them. Open range cattlemen began to cut fences, and ranchers began to fight back.



But the open range way of life was dying along with the cattle drives, for the same reasons. Declining beef prices, hard winters and the arrival of railroads combined with the ranchers' fences to drive open range cattlemen out of business around the mid-1880s.

FASCINATING FACTS: Time Zones

The invention of telegraphs and the rapid travel made possible by railroads led to some confusion in timekeeping. During the mid-1800s, every town along every railroad line had its own time, measured according to the position of the sun. Each town set its clocks by sextants or sundials that it used to mark high noon. Because of the rotation of the earth, these sundial times were different in every town, east or west, near or far.

As railroads became more common, some railroad stations began to keep one clock for every town along their rail line. Each clock was set to the correct time for its particular town and kept accurate by telegraph. In this way, the railroad could tell its passengers what the local time would be when they arrived at their destinations.

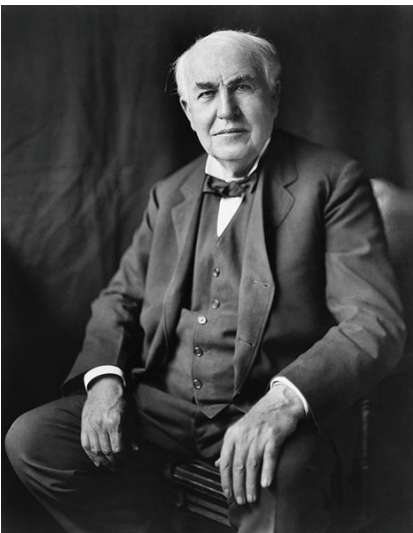
The British were the first to establish "Railway Time," a standard time maintained at rail stations all over Britain. Railway Time was equal to Greenwich Mean Time, the standard time established for oceangoing

navigators, and was the same all over Britain. For years, each British town had to keep track of two times: Railway Time and its own local sundial time. During those years, the British fashioned their clocks and watches so that they had two minute hands—one for sundial time, and one for Railway Time.

The United States was far broader than Britain, so a single time for



the entire nation wouldn't do. Because of the earth's rotation, high noon in New York equaled only about 9 AM in California. In order to keep clock times reasonably close to sundial times, the United States adopted four time zones—Eastern, Central, Mountain and Pacific—and set all local clocks according to the standard within their time zone. This standard was adopted on November 18, 1883, the "Day of Two Noons," when railroad stations all over the nation adjusted their clocks to the standard time inside their time zone.



AMAZING AMERICANS: Thomas Alva Edison (1847 – 1931)

Ohio-born, Michigan-grown Thomas Edison was the most talented, persistent and successful inventor of his time. From his innovative research laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey, Edison patented hundreds of useful inventions that changed lives all over the world. Among them:

1. **The Phonograph:** Before he even built his lab at Menlo Park, Edison invented a device that could record and play back sound. His recording medium was a tinfoil-covered cylinder, and needles attached to diaphragms created and played back the impressions on the tinfoil. His first successful recording was of himself reciting a nursery rhyme.

2. **The Edison Bulb:** Edison's light bulb was a refinement of an earlier invention, the arc light. The arc light made light with an electric spark that passed between two electrodes. Part of the reason the Statue of Liberty was a failure as a lighthouse was because it used an unreliable arc light. Edison's first refinement to the arc light was to use a glowing filament instead of a spark to carry the electric current. Then he removed the air from the glass bulb that housed the filament, so that the filament couldn't react with the oxygen in the air and burn up.
3. **The Kinetoscope:** Edison invented equipment to record and play back pictures taken in rapid sequence, giving the appearance of movement. These were the first motion pictures.



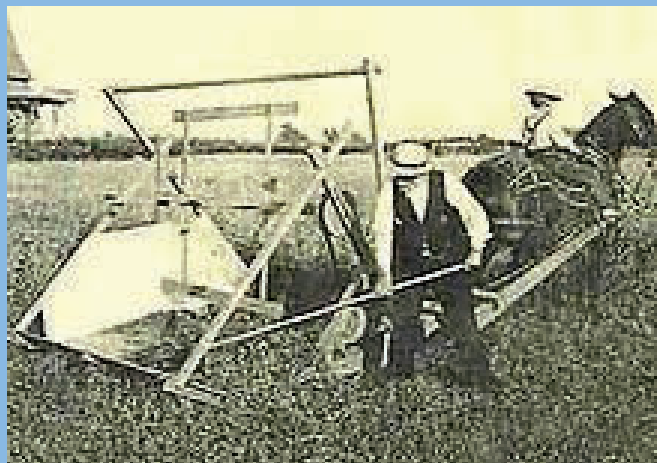
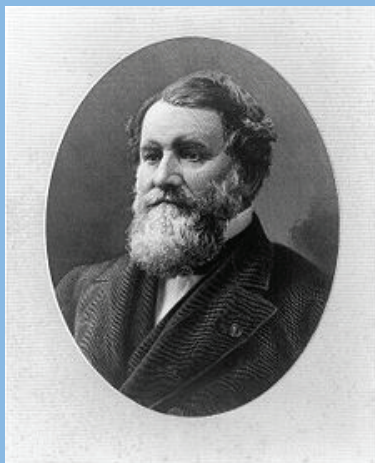
Edison also invented other practical things such as the mimeograph machine and waxed paper. He was not always right, though: In the "War of the Currents," Edison stubbornly insisted that his Direct Current system for transmitting electric power was superior to the Alternating Current system championed by Tesla and Westinghouse. Later developments proved that Edison was wrong.

Edison was an eccentric with great powers of concentration and dogged persistence. He never let go of a problem; he even left his bride on her wedding night to attend to some nagging difficulty with one of his ongoing experiments. These Edison quotes highlight his philosophy of persistence:

- "I never did anything by accident, nor did any of my inventions come by accident; they came by work."
- "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."
- "Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration."

AMAZING AMERICANS: Cyrus McCormick (1809 – 1884) and Jerome Case (1819 – 1891)

The process of growing and processing wheat changed little from Bible times through the beginning of the Industrial Age. Producing wheat was a labor-intensive process of many steps: plowing, fertilizing, sowing, scything (cutting), binding, drying, flailing (threshing) and milling. In the mid-1800s, two inventors designed machines that could take the place of many men in the work of harvesting and processing wheat: Cyrus McCormick and Jerome Case.



Virginia-born Cyrus McCormick patented his reaper, a machine that took the place of the hand scythe, in 1834. McCormick's horse-drawn reaper could harvest an acre of wheat in an hour, about four to eight times as fast as a man with a scythe. Hand laborers walked behind McCormick's reaper, binding the sheaves of wheat for drying and later threshing. McCormick's company became the International Harvester Company, which later made tractors and other types of farm machinery. Early International Harvester tractors, invented and built decades after McCormick's death in 1884, still bore McCormick's name.

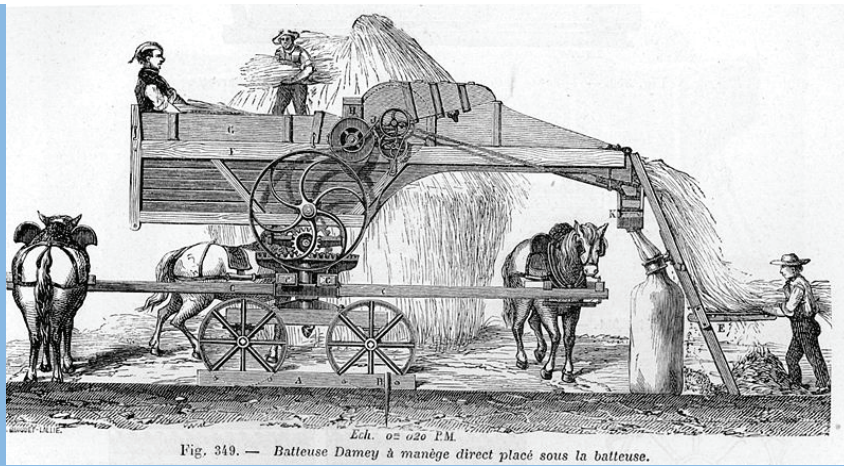
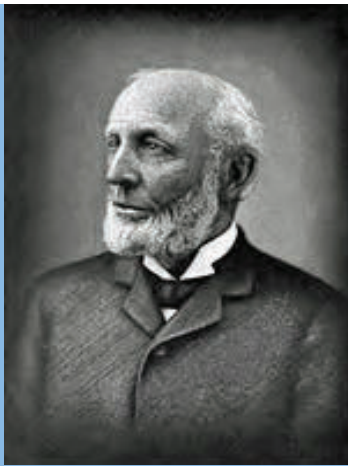


Fig. 349. — Batteuse Damey à manège direct placé sous la batteuse.

New York-born Jerome Case made several improvements and refinements to the threshing machine, a device for separating kernels of wheat from the straw on which they grow. Case's first commercial thresher appeared in 1844. When they were working well, threshing machines could take the place of many laborers working with flails on a threshing floor.

Case's early wooden-bodied threshing machines were unwieldy contraptions with multi-belted, whirling shafts jutting in every direction. They required almost constant adjustments to account for different grain sizes. For the skilled, patient operator, threshing machines could produce clean wheat and leave almost no grain on the straw. They were powered by windmill shafts, horse-turned shafts or early stationary steam engines. Later, they were powered by steam tractors.

U.S. GEOGRAPHY FOCUS

FASCINATING FACTS about ARKANSAS:

- **Statehood:** Arkansas became the 25th state on June 15, 1836.
- **Bordering states:** Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas
- **State capital:** Little Rock
- **Area:** 53,179 sq. mi (Ranks 29th in size)
- **Abbreviation:** AR
- **State nickname:** "The Natural State"
- **State Bird:** Mockingbird
- **State tree:** Short Leaf Pine
- **State flower:** Apple Blossom
- **State songs:** *Arkansas* and *Oh Arkansas*
- **State Motto:** "The People Rule"
- **Meaning of name:** *Arkansas* is from a Sioux word that means "downstream" or "south wind."
- **Historic places to visit in Arkansas:** Ozarks, Hot Springs National Park, Blanchard Springs Cavern, Mountain Village 1890, Toltec Mounds Archaeological State Park, Tiny Town, Petit Jean State Park
- **Resources and Industries:** farming (chickens, eggs, cotton, cattle, dairy, hogs, rice, soybeans, cotton, sorghum) paper and plastics, food processing, diamond mining, oil, steel



Cedar Falls in Petit Jean State Park

Flag of Arkansas

- Arkansas adopted this flag in 1913.
- Its design is by Willie Kavanaugh Hocker, who won a design contest.
- The diamond on the flag represents the fact that Arkansas is the only place in North America where miners have found diamonds.
- The flag's 25 stars represent the fact that Arkansas was the 25th state to join the Union.
- The star above the word *Arkansas* represents the Confederate States of America. The three stars under the word *Arkansas* represent Spain, France and the United States. All four of these nations held Arkansas territory at one time.



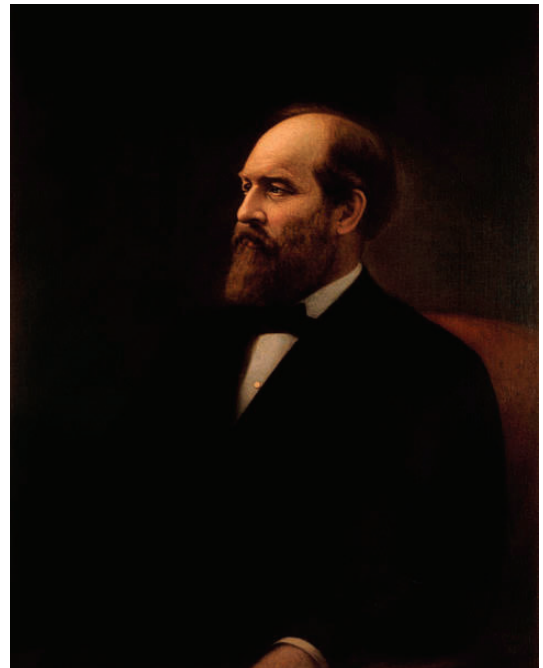
PRESIDENTIAL FOCUS

PRESIDENT # 20: James A. Garfield (1831 – 1881)	
In Office: March 4, 1881 – September 19, 1881	Political Party: Republican
Birthplace: Ohio	Nickname: “Preacher President”

James Garfield was a Civil War officer who was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in late 1863, while the war was still going on. As a U.S. Representative from Ohio, Garfield became one of the Radical Republicans of the Reconstruction era who sought to punish the South for its rebellion. Garfield and his wife were both abolitionists and strong Christians.

Garfield had served as President for only two months when he was shot in the back by a former campaign supporter, the mentally unstable Charles Guiteau. Guiteau was an attorney who felt that he deserved to be appointed as a well-paid U.S. ambassador because he had helped Garfield win election as President. When President Garfield failed to appoint him ambassador, Guiteau was angry enough and crazy enough to shoot him.

Garfield's doctors tried to pinpoint the location of the bullet, which was lodged in Garfield's spine, using a metal detector provided by inventor Alexander Graham Bell. Unfortunately, the metal springs of Garfield's bed made the metal detector useless. President Garfield died of infection, blood poisoning and other complications about 2 months after the shooting.



Other interesting facts about James Garfield:

- Garfield was the Union's youngest general during the Civil War.
- Garfield was the first left-handed President.
- Although he came from an extremely poor family, Garfield educated himself thoroughly. He could write Latin with one hand and Greek with the other, all at the same time.
- Garfield produced his own original proof of the Pythagorean Theorem, the ancient mathematical theorem which says that the hypotenuse of a right triangle is equal to the square root of the sum of the squares of the remaining two sides.

Notable quotes from James Garfield:

- “Next in importance to freedom and justice is popular education, without which neither freedom nor justice can be permanently maintained.
- “Poverty is uncomfortable; but nine times out of ten the best thing that can happen to a young man is to be tossed overboard and compelled to sink or swim.”

PRESIDENT #21: Chester Alan Arthur (1829 – 1886)

In Office: September 19, 1881 – March 4, 1885	Political Party: Republican
Birthplace: Vermont	Nickname: “Gentleman Boss”

Chester Arthur was President Garfield’s vice president, so he assumed office when Garfield died, becoming the third President within the single year of 1881. Arthur had been a prominent abolitionist lawyer in New York both before and after the Civil War, and he had served the Union army during the war as one of its best quartermasters (supply managers). Arthur had never before served in elected office when he was surprisingly nominated as James Garfield’s vice presidential running mate.

As President, Arthur signed the Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act, which was intended to put a stop to the corrupt practice of doling out government jobs to the people who helped government officials win their election campaigns. Before the Pendleton Act, grateful election winners too often handed out valuable government jobs and appointments to those who had helped them win office, without even considering their qualifications for the jobs. The passage of the Pendleton Act was partly a response to President Garfield’s assassination: the unstable assassin, Charles Guiteau, had seen so many corrupt political appointments that he assumed that he, too, was owed one. He shot Garfield for refusing him an appointment as a U.S. ambassador.

Other interesting facts about Chester Arthur:

- Arthur spent a good deal of time in Canada. His political enemies once claimed that he was ineligible to be President because, they said, he had been born in Canada.
- Arthur hired a prominent New York designer named Tiffany to spruce up the dreary White House, spending the modern-day equivalent of about 2 million dollars on the project.
- A man of elegant tastes, Arthur owned over 80 pairs of pants and changed his pants several times a day.
- Arthur suffered from a kidney disease that sapped his energy late in his Presidency. He was not nominated for re-election, and died two years after he left office.

Notable quotes from Chester Arthur:

- “Men may die, but the fabrics of free institutions remains unshaken.”
- “If it were not for the reporters, I would tell you the truth.”

