**RAILROADS AND MANIFAST DESTINY: 1830-1860**

*“Hell in Harness by the tarnal”* Davey Crockett exclaimed at the sight of his first train

“*The web of railroads which Chicago has spun around itself during the last ten years is the thing that more than anything else has contributed to its wealth and progress”* Gustaf Unonius 1860

**IN THE BEGINNING “Tom Thumb” vs the gray horse**

* Tracks preceded Trains – 1820’s tracks carry horse drawn carriages – better than commonly rutted, unpaved roads - Rails usually wood with bands of iron on top – in Maryland they tried stone rails with iron bands – wood was unsatisfactory it often tears loose & curls up at 15 mph
* Steam engines first appeared in England – in America businessman and inventor Peter Cooper (1791-1883) saw combining rail and steam to be an idea money could be made from
* The “Stourbridge Lion” built 1829 in England is imported to America where it is studied & copied
* 14 miles of track are laid between Baltimore & Ellicott’s Mills, horse drawn carriage take passenger for 25 cents per trip - May 30, 1830, Cooper’s locomotive “Tom Thumb” with 1 hp pulls 4 tons at 15 mph-A Race is advertised between Tom Thumb and a Gray Horse, August 28, 1830 the race is held, horse quickly jumps to lead but Tom Thumb catches and passes the horse – then a safety valve blew losing power and the horse wins the race, the train wins the future

**THE” GO-AHEAD” AGE**

* Baltimore & Ohio offers $4000 reward for improved engines “The York” by Phineas Davis (a watchmaker) wins – on the Mohawk & Hudson RR the “Dewitt Clinton” took 3 cars 30 mph
* The Baltimore & Ohio RR is founded July 4, 1828, opposed by farmers (Right of way), canal and highway companies, and teamsters (fear of losing jobs) – but by 1832 B&O RR had already carried 140,000 people between Baltimore and Wash DC
* Rails often imported from England – 6 miles of track between Philadelphia and Germantown cost $30,000 per mile Early train boilers used wood, then switched to coal
* Constraints on Railroads – State Legislatures under control of Canal builders, scarcity of money, inadequate rails, constant litigation, disastrous accidents, barns, and fields set on fire by sparks
* Boston took the lead – 1850 3000 miles of tracks from Boston to NYC and west to Ohio – the South is already falling behind in track miles, South Caroline in 1833 has only 137 miles of track
* The Philadelphia -Columbia RR using engine designed by Mathias Baldwin drew 30 cars with 16 passengers each – Mathias Baldwin (1795-1866) will become an important manufacturer of steam locomotives
* Canals continued to be built in competition – Erie Canal 363 miles completed in 1825 connects NYC to Great Lakes – Illinois & Michigan Canal 96 miles long connecting Chicago to Illinois River at LaSalle Peru build from 1836-1848, stopped several times for money problems (Panic of 1837) even with railroad competition it would continue to provide freight service until 1933 when it was replaced by the Illinois Waterway which is in use today
* The Railroad boom called itself the “GO AHEAD” age, technology for labor saving and **speed**, the world view of Americans was that all problems would be solved – PROGRESS

**THE PROBLEMS OF GO AHEAD**

* It will be 11 years before stockholders of the B&O RR see return (and then only 2%)
* Railroads often have different gauges (distance between tracks) requiring unloading and reloading at line ends - many engines are imported from England built by George Stephenson (1741-1848) in England called the Father of Railways, he uses 4 Feet 8-1/2 inches which will become the standard if you want to compete with him
* Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) believes the train will complete the conquest of the continent – manifest Destiny of America to conquer nature of North America (nature defined as the wilderness and the native Americans)
* British Capital and Irish immigrant labor builds the railroads
* Railroads consolidate and the Pennsylvania RR shifts from passengers to freight to get western business from canals – coal becomes the primary freight along with wheat and lumber
* Farmers could now ship fresh produce milk and eggs, fruit vegetables to city markets but are forced to specialize in one crop for volume, farmer vulnerable to middleman (wholesaler)

**LAND GRANT - THE CENTRAL ILLINOIS RAILROAD – THE ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD ICRR**

* 1832 Black Hawk Sauk chief war, Gov John Reynolds calls militia, lack of transportation
* Captain Alexander Jenkins Speaker of Ill House proposes Central Illinois RR down center of state
* 1837 Illinois sets aside $11 million for Central Illinois RR but panic of 1837, Illinois bankrupted
* THE ISSUE – purchasing public land for Right of Way, also need adjacent land for growth
* 1847 Stephen Douglas runs for Senator, platform, **Federal** bill in congress for Land Grant for right of way instead of purchase, elected, Sen William King (AL) adds amendment for Land Grant for Mobile to Ohio RR Bill gives ICRR 1/ Right of way 200 ft through public land, 2/Alternate sections of Land six miles either side of RR, 3/ RR must be started within 2 years, finished in 10
* 1850 bill passed Senate 26-14, House 101-77, Pres Millard Fillmore signs
* 1851 Illinois senate vote 23-2, Ill House vote 72-2, Gov Augustus French signs 2-10 ICRR born
* Work Camps were unsanitary w/ Cholera epidemics killing many workers (Irish) on completion in 1856 near Mason IL the ICRR is the longest RR in the world
* **Railroad land Grants** **ICRR first land grant railroad & the national model - State of Illinois gave the ICRR 2,595,000 acres of land along its right of way – land revenues for ICRR went from 16 cents/acre to $10/acre in 5 years, in 10 years $30/acre**
* In Chicago, right of way problems” **SOLVED**” by building trestles offshore in Lake Michigan, later this was land filled with debris from the Great Fire of 1871 and called Grant Park

**RAILROADS AND MANIFEST DESTINY**

* 1840’s sees quadrupling of RR miles at enormous cost both in money (much is not recovered, RR bankruptcies) and in lives lost (primary Irish workers and RR accidents) – in 1850’s RR miles quadrupled again
* The first locomotive to reach Chicago is “The Pioneer” built in 1837 at Baldwin Locomotive Works – sold used to Galena & Chicago Union RR (G&CU RR) owned by William Ogden (1805-1877) businessman, Railroad Executive and first mayor of Chicago – the train is on display at the Chicago History Museum, the tender did not survive – The train is a 4-2-0 wheel configuration very common in the 1840’s and 1850’s – The notation in its basic form counts the number of lead turning wheels then the number of driving wheels and finally the number of trailing wheels
* By 1858 Chicago is the terminus for 12 trunk lines, 3 lines ran from Chicago to NYC in less than 36 hours (once this journey took 10 days)
* The passion to “Go Ahead” emphasis on speed exacted heavy price in lives & serious injuries – 1838 alone had 496 dead in boiler explosions alone not counting wrecks
* Railroad building will connect Midwest to Northeast for protecting the Union in Civil War
* Railroad boom was “reckless enthusiasm” “extravagant passion” Canals now seemed slow, the loss of money and life seemed acceptable price to pay for intoxicating speed & progress
* **If one invention can be said to have had a determining effect on the history America it was the railroad – In the beginning water was the element which America moved via canoes, sailboats, steamships on lakes, rivers, and canals driving American travel and commerce but with the railroad total freedom to develop the country will lead to the automobile in the 20th Century**

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