

## Riding the Rails



*The advanced industrial development of the United States and much of the white settlement of the Western portion of the country coincided with, and was spurred by, the invention and spread of the railroad in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. How much do you know about this history?*

1. Pick the year when the most miles of railroad tracks were in service in the United States:
  - 1896
  - 1916
  - 1946
  - 1996
2. The immediate trigger of the Financial Panic of 1873 occurred when:
  - The Northern Pacific Railroad, spurred by the grant of millions of acres of federal land, built financially unsustainable lines into these nearly uninhabited territories, finally causing its stock to fall and the finance house that was its agent to go bankrupt.
  - The thousands of immigrant workers who had been employed by the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific Railroads to lay the first transcontinental line finished the job in 1869 and were laid off and suddenly entered the labor pool, driving down wages in many industries.
  - A long strike by railroad workers on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad spread nationwide and paralyzed the movement of freight, causing business activity around the country to stall.
  - Financiers Jay Gould, James Fisk, and Daniel Drew manipulated the stock price of the Erie Railroad in order to gain complete control over the company from Cornelius Vanderbilt.
3. If you boarded a passenger train in 1870, with which of the following items of safety equipment was it likely equipped?
  - Automatic air brakes
  - Automatic coupling mechanisms to join and separate the car
  - Steam heating in the passenger cars
  - None of the above
4. Which of these was the worst train wreck in U.S. history?
  - John Luther "Casey" Jones was an engineer who worked for the Illinois Central Railroad, who died in a collision with the rear of a stalled freight train at Vaughan, MS, on April 30, 1900.



- Engineer Joseph A. "Steve" Broady operated the "Fast Mail," also known as the "Old 97," of the Southern Railway. It left the track at Stillhouse Trestle near Danville, VA, on September 27, 1903.
- The wreck on "Dutchman's Curve" in Nashville, TN, on July 9, 1918, when two passenger trains of the Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway collided head-on. 101 people died and 171 more were injured.
- The wreck of the Amtrak Sunset Limited on September 22, 1993, when it derailed on a bridge over the Big Bayou Canot in southwestern Alabama, minutes after the bridge had been hit by a barge and the rails had been bent out of shape.

<http://teachinghistory.org/history-content/quiz>