

Summary: Moving West

Transportation in the 1800s

In the 1800s, many people moved west. They wanted to make new lives in California or Oregon. They used many kinds of transportation. In the early 1800s, people arrived in St. Louis by horse or boat. From there they followed rough trails across the country. Some people walked. Others drove wagons. They crossed rivers and mountains. It was a long, hard trip.

The invention of the steam engine made transportation faster. In 1807, Robert Fulton built a steamboat. It used a steam engine for power. Soon pioneers could take steamboats to St. Louis. Then they could travel by wagon the rest of the way. By the 1830s, the East had its first railroads. Soon steam engines powered the trains.

Communication in the 1800s

Samuel Morse helped invent the first telegraph. Signals spread along a wire stretched between stations. In 1844, telegraph lines could send messages between cities in minutes. Telegraphs and trains made life easier in the East.

Transportation and communication were slower in the West. People got news from ships and stagecoaches. Then the Pony Express began. Young horseback riders carried the mail. They rode from Missouri to California in about 10 days. The Pony Express ended when telegraph lines crossed the country in 1861. In 1869, a railroad connected the East and West. The railroad and the telegraph made it possible for Americans to cross the country and send news more quickly than before. These inventions united the nation.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

transportation *noun*, the way people and things are carried from one place to another

steam engine *noun*, a machine that turns steam into power

railroad *noun*, a track with two steel rails on which trains move

telegraph *noun*, a machine that sends signals by electricity



After You Read

REVIEW In what ways did steam engines change transportation? Circle the sentence that tells the answer.

REVIEW In what ways did the telegraph affect the United States? Highlight the sentence that tells the answer.