Timeline of United States railway history

The **Timeline of U.S.A Railway History** is as follows:

- **1810s—1830s**: Various inventors and entrepreneurs make suggestions about building model railways in the United States; In 1825 John Stevens (inventor) builds a test track and runs a locomotive around it in his summer home estate, Hoboken, New Jersey.

- **1820s and 1830s**: The Baltimore and Ohio is incorporated in 1827 and officially opens in 1830.[1] Other railroads soon follow, including the Camden and Amboy by 1832.

- **August 8, 1829**: The *Stourbridge Lion*, first steam locomotive in the US, is tested along tracks built by the Delaware and Hudson company.

- **1830s–1860s**: Enormous railway building booms in the United States. Railroads replace canals as a primary mode of transportation.

- **1850s–1860s**: Railroads begin using the electric telegraph to control train movements through the use of train orders. This practice reduces train collisions and improves efficiency.

- **1853**: Indianapolis’ Union Station, the first "union station" in the world, opened by the Terre Haute & Richmond, Madison & Indianapolis, and Bellefontaine railroads.

- **1865**: George Pullman becomes well known for luxury sleeping cars, called Pullman cars in his honor, after he loans one of his cars to house the coffin of Abraham Lincoln after Lincoln’s assassination.

- **1869**: Union Pacific and Central Pacific complete first transcontinental railway link at Promontory Summit.[2]

- **1869**: George Westinghouse establishes air brake company.

- **1870s**: Railroads begin to install automatic block signals which improve safety, allows faster train speeds, and allow more efficient utilization of track-age.

- **1870s and 1880s**: Strikes break out against railroads and the Pullman Palace Car Company. Corporations hire Pinkerton guards to break up the strikes. Nonetheless, much violence occurs in the strikes. Many people were killed, buildings and rolling stock were burned, and reports of rioting shocked middle-class Americans.

- **1865**: George Pullman becomes well known for luxury sleeping cars, called Pullman cars in his honor, after he loans one of his cars to house the coffin of Abraham Lincoln after Lincoln’s assassination.

- **1883**: Standard time zones adopted by railroads.[3]

- **1886**: Many southern states convert from broad gauges such as 1,524 mm (5 ft) to standard gauge 1,435 mm (4 ft 8 1⁄2 in). (See also Broad gauge#United States.)

- **1887**: Congress creates the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) to regulate railroads and ensure fair prices.[4]

- **1891**: Webb C. Ball establishes first Railway Watch official guidelines for Railroad chronometers.

- **1893**: Railroad Safety Appliance Act requires air brakes and automatic couplers on all trains, which greatly reduces railroad worker injuries and deaths.[5]

- **1896**: Supreme Court rules in United States v. Gettysburg Electric Ry. Co. that the Takings Clause under eminent domain could be applied for historic preservation.

- **1901**: Nine locomotive manufacturing companies are combined in a merger to form the American Locomotive Company (ALCO).

- **1902**: Twentieth Century Limited inaugurated by the New York Central railroad.

- **1910s**: Pennsylvania Railroad builds Pennsylvania Station in New York City; New York Central builds current version of Grand Central Terminal.
● 1916: US railroad trackage was 230,468.32 mi (370,902.81 km),[6] the highest in history. The trackage would increase to over 300,000 mi by the next decade.

● 1917: President Woodrow Wilson orders nationalization of the railroads shortly after the US enters World War I.[7] The United States Railroad Administration manages the system until 1920, when Congress returns control to the railroad companies.[8]

● 1920s and 1930s: Automobiles, airplanes and the Great Depression contribute to a decline in railroad ridership and mileage.

● 1926: Congress passes the Railway Labor Act to settle disputes and avoid strikes (law amended in 1934 and 1936).[9]


● May 12, 1936: The Santa Fe railroad inaugurates the all-Pullman Super Chief between Chicago and Los Angeles, California.

● 1940s: World War II brings railroads the highest ridership in American history, as soldiers are being sent to fight overseas in the Pacific Theater and the European Theater. However, automobile travel causes ridership to decline after the war ends.

● March 20, 1949: The Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad, Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad and Western Pacific Railroad jointly launch the California Zephyr between Chicago and San Francisco, California as the first passenger train to include Vista Dome cars in regular service.

● 1950s and 1960s: Drastic decline in passenger travel in the United States, due to automobiles and also airplanes, as first jetliners take to the air. Railroads respond through mergers and attempts to shed unprofitable trains and rail routes. The speed of these efforts is reduced through the difficulties of Interstate Commerce Commission hearings.

● 1957, The Nashville-Chattanooga and St.Louis is absorbed into its parent road the Louisville & Nashville.

● December 1, 1959: ICC approved Virginian Railway merger into Norfolk & Western begins modern-day period of railroad mergers and consolidation.

● July 1, 1967: The Twentieth Century Limited makes last run.


● February 1968: Pennsylvania Railroad and New York Central merge to form Penn Central. The New Haven was added in 1969. March 1 1970 Burlington Northern is created with the consolidation of the *Chicago Burlington & Quincy, Great Northern, Northern Pacific and Spokane Portland & Seattle railroads.

● March 22, 1970: The California Zephyr, on its last run, arrives in Oakland, California from Chicago; the train name will soon be resurrected by Amtrak on a train travelling almost the same route as the original train. *June 21 1970 the Penn Central files for chapter 7 Bankruptcy, becoming the largest corporate failure up to that time in US history.


● 1970s: Conrail, is created from the remains of the bankrupt Penn Central, Erie Lackawanna, Central of New Jersey, Reading and Lehigh Valley Railroads in the Northeastern US, Beginning operations April 1st 1976.


● September 15, 1981: The John Bull becomes the oldest operable steam locomotive in the world when it runs under its own power inside Washington, DC.

● 1981: Union Pacific 3985 is restored to operating condition, making it the largest operable steam locomotive in the world.

● July 1 1982, Norfolk & Western and Southern Railway merge to form Norfolk Southern.

● January 1, 1986: The Milwaukee Road is merged into the Soo Line Railroad in the largest railroad bankruptcy proceedings to date in America.

● July 1 1986, Seaboard System and Chessie System merge to form CSX Transportation corp.
• 1990s: Amtrak funding comes under heavier scrutiny by Congress, while Amtrak creates new trains such as the Talgo and the Acela Express.

• 1995: ICC abolished; Congress creates Surface Transportation Board to assume the remaining regulatory functions.[12]

• 1997–99: Conrail assets sold to Norfolk Southern Railway and CSX Transportation.


1 See also

• History of rail transport in the United States
• Oldest railroads in North America
• Timeline of railway history
• Timeline of transportation technology

2 References


3 Text and image sources, contributors, and licenses

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- Timeline of United States railway history
  

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