

## THE SOUTH AND WEST TRANSFORMED

**Geography and History**

The earliest railroads could be dangerous to travel. Sparks from wood fuel might ignite the clothing of travelers and cheap materials used in the rails could cause accidents. Bumpy stagecoaches were not much better. Ships and boats offered the most comfortable way to travel. As railroad technology advanced, however, train travel easily overtook stagecoaches and boats as the most reliable, speedy, and economical form of transportation. By the 1860s, the government and private businesses were at work to build a railroad to link California—with its vast gold wealth and resources—to the East. ♦ Use the information from the map in Section 3 of your textbook and the chart below to answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

**The Role of Railroads**

	1860	1870	1880	1890	1899
New England	3,660	4,494	5,977	6,832	7,448
Middle Atlantic States	6,353	10,577	15,147	20,038	22,206
Central Northern	9,583	14,701	25,109	36,976	40,850
South Atlantic	5,463	6,481	8,474	17,301	21,232
Gulf and Mississippi Valley	3,727	5,106	6,995	13,343	15,718
Southwestern	1,162	4,625	14,085	32,888	36,942
Northwestern	655	5,004	12,347	27,294	31,228
Pacific	23	1,934	5,128	12,031	15,209
U.S. Total	30,626	52,922	93,262	166,703	190,833

**Questions to Think About**

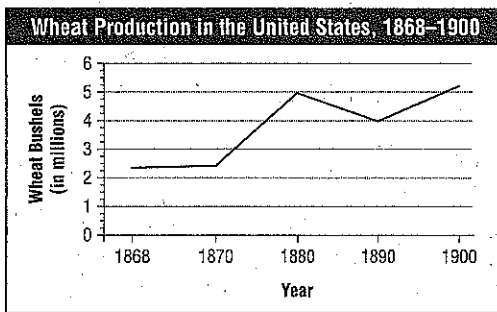
- Which region of the country had the fewest railroads in 1870? Which region had the most?
- Which industry likely encouraged the expansion of railroads in the Southwestern and Pacific regions?
- Draw Conclusions**  
What is the relationship between railroads and cities?

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**Geography and History**

The expansion of railroads spurred the U.S. economy in a number of ways. The federal government provided loans and land grants to the companies that built the transcontinental railroad. Once it was built, the companies looked for ways to increase usage and make a profit. As agriculture expanded, farmers used railroads to ship their crops to market. Building even more railroads meant that more iron and manufactured equipment were needed, which spurred industries that provided these. Furthermore, the use of railroads for shipping reduced transportation costs in the United States, saving the economy millions of dollars in the late nineteenth century. ♦ *Study the Economic Development of the West map in Section 3 of your textbook and the charts below. Then answer the questions on a separate sheet of paper.*

**Railroads and Economic Development**



	1860	1870	1880	1890	1899
New England	3,660	4,494	5,977	6,832	7,448
Middle Atlantic States	6,353	10,577	15,147	20,038	22,206
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**Questions to Think About**

- 1. About how many bushels of wheat were produced in the United States in 1880? How many miles of track had been laid in the United States by that year?**
- 2. Making Inferences** In what ways might the building of railroads have helped to expand the production of wheat in the United States?
- 3. Predict Consequences** If the price of a barrel of oil continues to rise, do you think that railroads might provide a viable alternative to hauling freight or traveling by airplane or truck? Explain why.