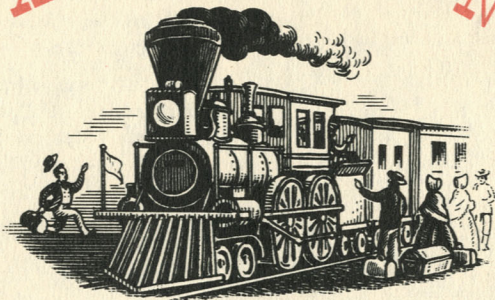


EXPOSITION!



The 100th anniversary of the operation of the first steam locomotive in and out of Chicago will be celebrated this summer with the opening in mid-July of the "Chicago Railroad Fair" a huge colorful exposition whose purpose is to present the hand-in-hand way in which the railroad industry pioneered and aided in the transformation of the country from backwood wilderness and prairie into productive agricultural and industrial areas. Site will be Chicago's lakefront where the Century of Progress Exposition was held some years ago; it will continue through Labor Day into September.

Burnham Park - Mid-July into September

Some of the Early Railroads in Chicago



This map, which covers period up to 1868, shows some of the railroads which played a leading part in the development of *Chicago and Northern Illinois*, railroads which spanned the prairies to open our lands to agriculture, to haul our field, forest, and mine products to the manufacturers, and to haul back their factory products to our growing towns and cities.

Service

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and Northern Illinois





Let a railway of timber be formed between Lake Erie and Albany, the angle of elevation in no part to exceed one degree, the carriage wheels of cast-iron, the rims flat with projecting flanges to fit the surface of the railways, the moving power to be a steam engine, nearly similar to the one on board the Juliana, a ferry boat plying between this city (New York) and Hoboken.

Had the state of New York listened to that proposal made in 1812 by John Stevens, steam engineer, sponsor of the Patent Law, and operator of the world's first steam ferry, New York would have built a railroad instead of the Erie Canal, and to this country instead of England would have gone the credit for the putting-together of tracks and steam power.

Years passed before the United States took railroads seriously enough to send engineers to England to study this new method of transportation. Then stories of that snorting iron monster, the steam locomotive, came back to be greeted with wild enthusiasm and downright disapproval.

In 1828, an application to use a schoolroom for a debate on railroads was rejected by the school board, thus: "You are welcome to use the schoolroom to debate all proper questions in, but such things as railroads are impossibilities and rank infidelity. There is nothing in the word of God about them. If God had designed that His intelligent creatures should travel at the frightful speed of fifteen miles an hour by steam, He would have foretold it through His holy prophets. It is a device of Satan to lead immortal souls down to Hell."

First railroad in this country was built in 1826 to carry granite for the Bunker Hill monument — it was three miles long and its cars were horse drawn. The first steam locomotive was the Stourbridge Lion, an English import, which proved too heavy for the hickory rails on its initial run in 1829. First railroad to provide public rides was the Baltimore and Ohio

whose first operation in January, 1830, was horse-powered. One carriage filled with twenty-four persons was drawn by one horse "at the extraordinary rate of fifteen miles an hour," and three carriages filled with eighty persons "were readily drawn by one horse at upwards of eight miles an hour without any apparent distress to the animal or indeed uncommon exertion on his part." In that same month, sailing was attempted on the B&O; the Aeolus, a car equipped with mast and sail, voyaged over the rails, but ran into a dirt bank at the end of the track before the sail could be furled. A horse motor came next — a horse on a treadmill built in a car, power being transferred to the wheels by belts and gears — but a cow on the track stubbornly refused to budge and spilled horse and motor into the ditch. First American made locomotive, "The Tom Thumb," was tried out on the B&O tracks that summer and made the memorable speed of eighteen miles an hour! (Tom Thumb is also remembered for having raced with a horse on one occasion and lost.)

Although Chicago, a squalid trading post in 1830, had become one of the state's most important towns by 1837, the Illinois Improvement Bill of that year, which projected 1,341 miles of railroad for the state (only 57 miles were built by 1850!), left Chicago 83 miles from the nearest line. This was because the Illinois-Michigan Canal under construction was to provide the city's transportation. But before the canal was completed, it was apparent that the waterway could not handle the increasing traffic.



During the lead mining days all roads led to Galena. Kellogg's Trail and the Dixon Ferry (now the City of Dixon) were well-known names. These lead mines were the objective of the first railroad in Chicago and Northern Illinois, the little Galena and Chicago Union Railroad (parent of the Chicago and North Western Railway) which received its first charter from the state legislature on January 10, 1836. This special charter authorized the commissioners



to build out into the fertile prairie towards the Mississippi River, near the "lead mines at Galena, Ill., and Dubuque, Ia.," and included a cautious proviso which would enable them to "construct a good and permanent turnpike road" and as many toll gates "as shall be deemed necessary thereon" if the railroad proved too ambitious a project. But along came the economic Panic of 1837; work was suspended in 1838 until 1847 when the Galena and Chicago Union's first president, William Ogden (who was also Chicago's first mayor), personally solicited the countryside for financial aid.

In October, 1848, the "Pioneer," a third-hand locomotive which was purchased in the East and shipped by brig, arrived in Chicago and everyone turned out to watch the sailors struggle to move the ten-ton wonder ashore.

The day before the "Pioneer" made its first run on October 25, 1848, the Chicago Daily

Journal announced "Galena Railroad—the iron horse is at length on the track and will 'fire up' in a day or two over the part of the road which is completed" and on October 26, "The locomotive on the Galena Road took a turn over it of about five miles yesterday, much to the satisfaction of a number of gentlemen who rode in the cars attached. Everything worked to a charm. Part of this road will now soon be in order for travel."

By December 18, ten-miles of iron-capped wooden rails had been laid and freight service was begun between Chicago and the DesPlaines River (now part of the town of Maywood). According to the Daily Journal, "The first shipment of goods over the Galena Railroad was made by W. Smith, whose store was at 143 South Water Street, and who forwarded a number of boxes of goods for DuPage County by the train which left here December 18, 1848" and "Jerome Beecher was on the first train dispatched over the G&CU Railway. It ran out to the DesPlaines River. While out in the country Mr. Beecher bought a lot of hides and pelts from a farmer who lived near where the train stopped and this was the first consignment of freight received in Chicago from over that line."

By July 4, 1849, the first passenger car, "an elegant vehicle" which cost "over \$2,000," was put in service on the railroad.

(Mr. Ogden, the G&CU's president, sat up

in the tower of Chicago's first passenger station where with the aid of a marine telescope he was able to spot his train three to five miles away and give "advance" train information to his patrons below.)

(The "Pioneer" burned wood, purchased from farmers along the route who were given "wood chits" or checks which they turned in later to the railroad for cash.)

Aurora saw the value of the railroad and on February 12, 1849, obtained a charter to build twelve miles north joining the Galena at "Junction" — later Turner Junction — now West Chicago.

So the second railroad in Northern Illinois to enter Chicago was the Aurora Branch (forerunner of the Burlington line). By August 31, 1850, six miles of strap-rail were ready for use between "Junction" and Batavia. But the tiny Aurora Branch had no rolling stock, so she borrowed the Galena's "Pioneer" to make her inaugural run over the Chicago Union's rails into Chicago on the morning of September 2, 1850. Thus it was that Chicago's first two railroads used the city's first locomotive, same passenger station and same tracks.

In that same month — September, 1850 — Congress set a new precedent when it granted over two and one-half million acres of public land to the State of Illinois to aid in "the construction of a railroad from the southern terminus of the Illinois and Michigan Canal to a point at or near the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, with a branch to Chicago on Lake Michigan, and another via the town of Galena to Dubuque in the State of Iowa." This railroad became the Illinois Central — first of the land grant railroads, an experiment which would greatly stimulate railway construction. The railroad era had come to Chicago, Northern Illinois, and the Mid-West.

First of two stories on our railroads.