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- Circa 1820 Robert Mills publishes *A Treatise on Inland Navigation*, in which he discusses roads, steamboats and “the application of the same moving power to carriages upon rail roads”.
- Circa 1820 A short, animal-powered railroad is reportedly used at a brick kiln in Savannah, Georgia.
- March 15, 1820 Maine becomes a state (see December 14, 1819).
- July 31, 1820 John W. Garrett is born in Baltimore.
- April 16, 1821 Collis P. Huntington is born in Harwinton, Connecticut.
- May 8, 1821 William H. Vanderbilt is born in New Brunswick, New Jersey.
- August 1821 After almost eleven years of civil unrest, Spain signs the Treaty of Cordoba, granting independence to Mexico.
- August 10, 1821 Jay Cooke is born in Sandusky, Ohio.
- August 10, 1821 Missouri becomes a state (see March 15, 1820).
- May 11, 1822 John Stevens begins operating a steamboat of his own design across the Hudson River between Hoboken, New Jersey and New York City (see February 6, 1815).
- Circa 1823 British military engineers construct an inclined railway from the St. Lawrence River to the citadel on Cape Diamond in Quebec City, Lower Canada. Cars are drawn uphill using a winch, powered by a stationary steam engine (Brown, Robert R., *Canada's Earliest Railway Lines*, R&LHS Bulletin #78, October 1949).
- March 31, 1823 Pennsylvania grants a charter for John Stevens' proposed railroad from Philadelphia to the Susquehanna River at Columbia in Lancaster County (see May 11, 1822).
- April 9, 1823 Lorenzo S. Coffin is born near Alton, New Hampshire.
- April 23, 1823 “The President, Managers and Company of the Delaware and Hudson Canal Company” is chartered by the New York State Legislature.
- May 21, 1823 Edward Hulbert is born in Berlin, Connecticut.
- December 23, 1823 Thomas A. Scott is born in Loudon, Pennsylvania.
- March 2, 1824 Chief Justice John Marshall reads the majority opinion in *Gibbons v. Ogden*. The high court declares the Fulton-Livingston steamboat monopoly to be unlawful, thereby establishing the right of the federal government to regulate interstate commerce.
- March 9, 1824 Leland Stanford is born in Watervliet, New York.



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- April 30, 1824 Congress passes the General Survey Act, authorizing Army engineers to survey and prepare cost estimates for new transportation routes - primarily canals and roads.
- June 8, 1824 John Stevens receives a patent for a proposed method of railroad construction. Stevens advocates a wooden roadway elevated above ground level (see March 31, 1823).
- December 1824 Forty-eight Philadelphia businessmen form the “Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Internal Improvements in the Commonwealth”, and send architect/engineer William Strickland to Great Britain for a study of canals and railroads.
- Circa 1825 An inclined railway is reportedly built at Nashua, New Hampshire, to aid in the removal of soil from the top of Indian Head, during construction of a textile mill (Dunbar, p.880).
- Circa 1825 Thomas Leiper dies at his home in Delaware County, Pennsylvania (see October 1809).
- January 25, 1825 Opening of the College of Science and Engineering at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York.
- May 11, 1825 A locomotive capable of hauling several passenger cars, is demonstrated by John Stevens at his estate in Hoboken, New Jersey
- July 4, 1825 Construction begins on extension of the Cumberland Road west from Wheeling, Virginia, a federally-funded project later known as the National Road.
- October 26, 1825 Completion of New York's great public work, the Erie Canal, connecting Lake Erie at Buffalo with the Hudson River at Albany.
- June 16, 1825 William Strickland publishes the first draft* of *Reports on Canals, Railways, Roads and Other Subjects, made to the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Internal Improvement* (see December 1824). A review of British engineering methods, it is the first practical manual on railroad construction available in the US. The illustrated volume, published in 1826, stimulates nationwide interest in railroads.
- *Strickland later alters his original conclusions, under pressure from Judge Kane of Philadelphia, to de-emphasize railroads in favor of canals.
- Circa 1826(?) A 4-mile, animal-powered railroad is reportedly built near Kingsley, Quebec, the **first railroad in British North America (Canada)** (see July 21, 1836)
- March 4, 1826 Granite Railway Company of Massachusetts is chartered to build a three-mile railroad between a quarry in Quincy and the Neponset River, where stone will be shipped by



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barge to the Bunker Hill battle monument site in Charlestown.

- March 4, 1826 Theodore D. Judah is born in Bridgeport, Connecticut.
- October 7, 1826 Opening of the Granite Railway, the **first railroad in Massachusetts** (see March 4, 1826). Cars loaded with stone descend by gravity, controlled by a rope and winch. Empty cars are returned by animal power.
- Circa 1827 President Simon Bolivar of Columbia commissions a survey to determine the feasibility of a railroad across the Isthmus of Panama. The report published in 1829 is favorable toward the project.
- Circa 1827 An animal-powered railroad is used to haul stone for construction of the Rideau Canal locks at Nepean Point near Bytown (Ottawa), Lower Canada. The tramway would be abandoned when the canal opened in 1832.
- Circa 1827(?) Abraham Potts builds a 1/2-mile, animal-powered railroad from his mines to the Schuylkill Canal at Port Carbon, Pennsylvania.
- February 28, 1827 An act of the Maryland legislature charters the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad.
- June 6, 1827 Opening of the Summit Hill-Mauch Chunk Railroad connecting a coal mine at Summit Hill, Pennsylvania with the Lehigh River at Mauch Chunk. Mules haul empty cars uphill and loaded cars, including a car for the mules, return downhill by gravity.
- September 18, 1827 Philadelphia political writer Matthew Carey, using the pen-name *Fulton*, publishes a tract promoting railroad development.
- October 27, 1827 Albert Fink is born in Lauterbach, Germany.
- December 1827 In his report to Pennsylvania canal commissioners, army engineer Major John Wilson finds that “a navigable connection between the eastern and western waters of Pennsylvania is wholly impracticable”. The state is contemplating a network of canals and railroads connecting Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.
- December 19, 1827 Organization of the South Carolina Canal & Rail Road Company.
- July 4, 1828 Ceremonies in Baltimore signal the start of work on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Charles Carroll, the last surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence and a B&O director, presides on this festive occasion.
- Circa 1829 A pamphlet is published in Boston entitled *Practicality and Expediency of a Railroad from Boston to the Hudson River*.
- Circa 1829 William C. Redfield of New York publishes a remarkable pamphlet entitled *Sketch of the Geographical Rout (sic) of a Great Railway, by which it is proposed to connect the canals and navigable waters, of New-York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois,*



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Michigan, Missouri, and the adjacent states and territories; opening thereby, a free communication, at all seasons of the year, between the Atlantic states, and the great valley of the Mississippi. Redfield advocated a 970-mile route from the Hudson River, via southern New York, to the Mississippi River, above the rapids at Rock Island, Illinois.

- Circa 1829 Thomas Leiper's railroad is abandoned in favor of a canal (see October 1809).
- January 1829 US Army engineers complete a survey for the proposed Hudson & Berkshire railroad in western Massachusetts (see April 30, 1824).
- January 16, 1829 Engineers submit a *Report to the Board of Directors of Internal Improvements of the State of Massachusetts, on the Practicability and Expediency of a Rail Road from Boston to the Hudson River and from Boston to Providence...* (same as above?)
- February 1829 South Carolina Canal & Railroad Company builds a temporary 150-foot long track in Charleston's Wentworth Street to test building materials and methods. A single mule is reported to have easily pulled a car loaded with 47 bales of cotton (see December 19, 1827).
- April 1829 175-feet of track is constructed on Chisholm's Wharf in Charleston, South Carolina (see February 1829).
- August 8, 1829 The locomotive *Lion*(?)* (built in Stourbridge, on the river Stour, near Birmingham, Great Britain), driven by consulting engineer Horatio Allen, is tested on the railroad of the Delaware & Hudson Canal Company (see April 23, 1823) between Carbondale and Honesdale, Pennsylvania. Finding the eight-ton import too heavy for the bridge over the Lackawaxen River, it is removed from the rails and abandoned. Despite its brief career, it is the **first steam locomotive to operate on a commercial railroad in North America.**
- *This locomotive has been commonly called *Stourbridge Lion*, but a contemporary newspaper account of its arrival in the US on June 12, 1829 says its name was simply *The Lion* (Brown, William H., *The History of the First Locomotives in America*, Chapter 15). Brown's sources also say the front of the locomotive was decorated with the face of a fierce-looking lion.
- September 1829 Peter Cooper tests a small locomotive of his design, built by Baltimore mechanic George W. Johnson and one of his apprentices, James Milholland. The **first locomotive designed and built in North America**, the engine has come to be called *Tom Thumb* (see below)

A locomotive named Tom Thumb?

The image of a tiny steam locomotive striving valiantly against a horse-drawn rail car is one of the icons of American history, found in virtually every book or article about



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early railroads. But was this little engine ever called *Tom Thumb* during its brief career? The evidence suggests that it was not.

Contemporary eyewitnesses refer to a “locomotive”, or “locomotive-engine”, or “Cooper’s locomotive”. William H. Brown devotes an entire chapter to the “Peter Cooper Locomotive” in his 1871 book. Neither Brown, nor Ross Winans, an associate of Cooper who is frequently quoted, ever use the name *Tom Thumb*. An article in *The Railroad and Engineering Journal* (May 1892) uses the phrase “Peter Cooper’s little experimental machine” and J. Snowden Bell’s authoritative 1912 book on early B&O engines never gives a name to Cooper’s locomotive.

The first name, other than Cooper, to be linked with this locomotive appears in an 1868 speech given by John H.B. Latrobe, in which he refers to “the triumph of this *Tom Thumb* engine”, a name then familiar to most Americans. At the time, General Tom Thumb (Charles S. Stratton) was the world’s most famous midget, and his stage name had become a household word, synonymous with all things small. Latrobe might have been the first and last person to use Peter Cooper and Tom Thumb in the same sentence, but as fate would have it, his speech was published and widely read, becoming a source for many subsequent accounts.

- October 6-14, 1829 Locomotive trials are held at Rainhill, near Liverpool, Great Britain, to select the best design for the Liverpool & Manchester Railway. Among the Americans present are George Brown and Ross Winans of the Baltimore & Ohio, and E.L. Miller, representing the South Carolina Canal & Rail Road.
- Circa 1830 Opening of the 4-mile Mill Creek Railroad connecting mines at Broad Mountain with the canal at Port Carbon, Pennsylvania.
- Circa 1830 Thomas Earle of Philadelphia publishes *A Treatise on Rail-roads and Internal Communications, Compiled from the Latest and Best Authors, With Original Sketches and Remarks*.
- January 14, 1830 Directors of the South Carolina Canal & Rail Road vote to adopt steam propulsion, after hearing convincing evidence on the subject from Horatio Allen (see February 1829).
- April 1, 1830 South Carolina Canal & Railroad Company operates a single car, propelled by sail, over its first mile of track (see January 14, 1830).
- May 22, 1830 Fifteen miles of the Baltimore & Ohio from Pratt Street on Baltimore's west side to Ellicott's Mills (Ellicott City) opens for regular service. The railroad contracts with a stagecoach operator, who furnishes drivers and horses, changing teams at Relay House on the Patapsco River. B&O is the **first railroad in Maryland** and the **first railroad in North America to carry revenue passengers**.
- August 8, 1830 The governor of Cuba presides over the first meeting of *Junta de Caminos Hierro* (Railroad Commission).



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- August 28, 1830 Peter Cooper's locomotive (see September 1829) pulls a regular train on a round-trip over the Baltimore & Ohio, making the return trip in record time, and becoming the **first American locomotive to transport revenue passengers**.
- October 13, 1830 Camden & Amboy Railroad president Robert L. Stevens, son of John Stevens, sails for Great Britain where he intends to order a locomotive and iron rails. During the voyage, he works on the design of a T-shaped rail which he believes will be superior to the flat iron bars and U-shaped rail currently in use.
- October 22, 1830 Locomotive *Best Friend of Charleston*, arrives in Charleston, destined for service on the South Carolina Canal & Rail Road Company. It is designed by Horatio Allen and built by the West Point Foundry Association of New York City, possibly the first commercial locomotive builder outside of Great Britain (see April 1, 1830).
- December 1830 On the Baltimore & Ohio, a driver falls from his seat on an overcrowded, horse-drawn coach and is killed. The driver is not a B&O employee (see May 22, 1830), but the accident marks the **first fatal accident on a US railroad**.
- December 7, 1830 South Carolina's *Charleston Mercury* states "The locomotive steam engine will start from the Lines at 1 and at half past 3 this afternoon with cotton, and cars for passengers", indicating the start of operation on the **first railroad in South Carolina** (see October 22, 1830).
- December 17, 1830 Former US president John Quincy Adams rides the Baltimore & Ohio between Baltimore and Relay House, Maryland. Adams makes the trip in a carriage which has been loaded aboard a flat car. Adams is the **first US president to travel by rail**, though not during his term in office.
- December 25, 1830 Christmas Day marks the formal public debut of the "locomotive steam engine" (*Best Friend of Charleston*) and cars of the South Carolina Canal & Rail Road, running numerous trips for the citizens of Charleston (see December 7, 1830).
- Circa 1831 Kentucky showman Joseph Bruen tours Indiana and other western states with a small steam locomotive and portable track. Frontier residents gladly pay for the novelty of riding behind the steam car (Dunbar, p 1070-1071).
- January 15, 1831 Soldiers and a small cannon ride the South Carolina Canal & Rail Road (see December 25, 1830), becoming the **first US troops to travel by rail**.
- March 3, 1831 George M. Pullman born in Brocton, Chautauqua County, New York.
- April 12, 1831 Grenville M. Dodge is born in Danvers, Massachusetts.
- April 23, 1831 Start of operation on the Ponchartrain Railroad. The animal-powered railroad between the Mississippi River and Lake Ponchartrain at New Orleans is the **first railroad in Louisiana**.



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- April 25, 1831 A model locomotive, capable of hauling two small passenger cars, begins operation at the Philadelphia Museum. It is designed and built by mechanic Matthias Baldwin, at the request of museum owner Franklin Peale.
- May 16, 1831 Camden & Amboy Railroad receives its first shipment of rails (see October 13, 1830). Company president Robert L. Stevens calls his new design “H-rail”, intended to be secured with “hook-headed spikes”. The rails, manufactured at the Guest Iron Works of Dowlais, Wales (UK), are 16-feet long and weigh about 40 pounds per yard.
- June 17, 1831 A fatal accident occurs in Charleston, on the South Carolina Canal & Railroad (see January 15, 1831). *Best Friend of Charleston*’s boiler explodes when its safety valve is supposed to have been deliberately held shut by the fireman. *Charleston Mercury* reports “A Negro belonging to Mrs. Surr had his thigh broken and another belonging to Mr. Lesesne received a severe cut on his face...”. Engineer Nicholas Darrell says that the fireman later died of his injuries (Brown, William H., *The History of the First Locomotives in America*, Chapter 29).

Slavery and Southern Railroads

In at least one respect, railroads in the southern United States were no different than any other business, making use of the large regional labor force composed of African slaves. Railroad companies owned slaves or leased them from others, and often did both. A list from the South Carolina Rail Road dated December 31, 1859 (Derrick, p. 312-3) shows 90 slaves owned by the company, one having been purchased as early as 1836. Among this company’s losses for the fiscal year 1865, the accountant notes “Negroes, 111, emancipated...\$190,973.” (Derrick, p. 232).

- June 30, 1831 About 100 members of Maryland’s Light Brigade militia ride the Baltimore & Ohio from Baltimore to quell a riot among railroad workers at Sykes’s Mill (Sykesville). They become the **first US troops transported by rail to see action***. The militia had to march seven miles from the end of track at the Forks of Patapsco to Sykes’s Mill (Dilts, p.136-139).

*The January 15, 1831 trip on the South Carolina Canal & Rail Road was a peaceful event.

- July 1, 1831 Opening of the Chesterfield Railroad in Virginia. The animal-powered line from Manchester, on the James River opposite Richmond, to coal mines 13½ miles west, is the **first common carrier railroad in Virginia** (see Circa 1811).
- July 4, 1831 “An Association of Gentlemen” in Rogersville, Tennessee, publishes the first issue of *Rail-Road Advocate*, containing current information on railroad construction.
- July 4, 1831 Opening of the New Castle & Frenchtown Railroad. This **first railroad in Delaware** spans the 17 miles between Frenchtown, Maryland and New Castle, Delaware.



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- August 9, 1831 The locomotive *DeWitt Clinton* pulls a train from Albany to Schenectady, New York over the Mohawk & Hudson Railroad, the **first railroad in New York**. This train will be immortalized in a detailed silhouette by artist William H. Brown, who sketches the train before boarding.
- Autumn 1831 DeWitt Clinton of the US Army Corps of Engineers, son of the late New York governor, is assigned to reconnoiter a railroad route from the Hudson River to the Mississippi, similar to that proposed by William Redfield (see circa 1829). By winter he has traveled as far west as Ohio, and reports favorably on the route.
- November 12, 1831 New Jersey legislators ride behind the Camden & Amboy's new locomotive *Stevens** (*John Bull*) on a short track in Bordentown, New Jersey. Designed and built in Great Britain by Robert Stephenson & Company, it is assembled in America by mechanic Isaac Dripps, who has never before seen a locomotive.
- *Originally named in honor of John Stevens. *John Bull* appears to have been an unofficial nickname, noting the locomotive's British origin, which was officially applied to the engine much later in its career.
- Circa 1832 Nicholas Wood publishes *A Practical Treatise on Rail Roads, Etc.* in Philadelphia.
- January 2, 1832 First issue of *The American Railroad Journal*. One skeptic writes "Rail-Road Journal? Phoebus, what a name! I should as soon think of a Patent Furnace or Cooking-Stove Journal. A newspaper devoted to *Railroads?*" (*Railway Age*, January 1993)
- February 6, 1832 An article in the Ann Arbor *Emigrant* makes the argument for a railroad from New York to Oregon.
- February 18, 1832 Octave Chanute is born in France.
- February 25, 1832 Incorporation of the Champlain & St. Lawrence Railroad.
- April 16, 1832 The first nine miles of the Boston & Worcester is completed between Boston and Newton, Massachusetts. Not the first railroad in Massachusetts (see October 7, 1826), but its first common carrier of freight and passengers. The Granite Railroad, although first, is a private company serving only the needs of a single industry.
- April 24, 1832 Erie Railroad is chartered to construct a line between the Hudson River and Lake Erie.
- June 6, 1832 Philadelphia, Germantown & Norristown begins regular service between Philadelphia and Germantown, using horse-drawn cars.
- July 25, 1832 Four visitors to the Granite Railway in Quincy, Massachusetts are involved in a runaway car accident, killing one and seriously injuring the others (see October 7, 1826).



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- July 31, 1832 The Baltimore *Gazette* reports that Phineas Davis' locomotive *The York* is the winner of a design competition sponsored by the Baltimore & Ohio. Purchased by the B&O, it is the **first US locomotive designed to burn coal**.
- September 17, 1832 British locomotive *Ponchartrain* begins operation on New Orleans' Ponchartrain Railroad (see April 23, 1831).
- November 14, 1832 Horse-drawn passenger service on the New York & Harlem begins in Manhattan, along the Bowery between Prince Street and 14th Street.
- November 23, 1832 Matthias Baldwin's locomotive *Old Ironsides* is tested on the Philadelphia, Germantown & Norristown Railroad (see June 6, 1832), running about 6 miles and attaining a top speed of 28 mph. Baldwin's engine strongly resembles *Stevens/John Bull* (see November 12, 1831), which Baldwin had examined during its assembly in America.
- December 5, 1832 A contractor transporting mail between Philadelphia and Lancaster, Pennsylvania begins using the West Chester Railroad, an animal-powered line between Philadelphia to West Chester, **the first US mail transported by rail(?)**.
- December 22, 1832 Fourteen miles of the Camden & Amboy Railroad, the **first railroad in New Jersey**, opens for business between Bordentown and Hightstown, New Jersey. The locomotive *Stevens*, or *John Bull*, or simply Number 1, is one of those placed in regular service (see November 12, 1831).
- Circa 1833 William Norris organizes the American Steam Carriage Company in Philadelphia, for the purpose of building locomotives. Norris is a friend and associate of Col. Stephen Long, an engineer and inventor who has been trying to develop a successful locomotive.
- January 1, 1833 Lexington & Ohio Railroad begins operating over its first six miles of track. The animal-powered line is the **first railroad in Kentucky**.
- April 29, 1833 The state of New York grants a charter to the Utica & Schenectady Railroad, which states "Aside from travelers' customary baggage, however, the railroad *may not carry any freight*". It is the first of several railroad charters having provisions designed to restrict competition with the Erie Canal (see below).

Protecting the Erie Canal: 1833-1860

Officially opened on October 12, 1825, the Erie Canal had been the largest and most expensive public works project in US history. New York's waterway between the Hudson River and Lake Erie became the economic lifeline of the region, providing thousands of jobs in daily commerce, in addition to the continuous work of maintaining and improving of the canal itself. Potential competition from *privately-owned* railroads was politically intolerable.



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The charter for the Utica & Schenectady is the first to contain language favoring the canal. Later railroad charters do not prohibit the carrying freight, but do require the railroad to pay tolls to the canal commission, equal to those paid by canal shippers. As a result, the railroads could haul freight profitably only during the winter, when the canal was closed due to cold weather.

When the state removes these tolls in 1851, many politicians, including the governor, still demand some form of subsidy payment. In 1860, New York's Attorney General sues the New York Central Railroad, claiming that the 1851 repeal had been unconstitutional, and seeks to recover \$5 million in unpaid tolls. The state's suit is eventually dismissed, after several courts refuse to uphold the argument, finally ending efforts to shelter the canal from competition.

- June 6, 1833 President Andrew Jackson rides the Baltimore & Ohio from Ellicott City to Baltimore, becoming the **first US President to travel by rail, during his term in office** (see December 17, 1830).
- October 3, 1833 South Carolina Canal & Rail Road Company completes its line from Charleston to Hamburg, on the Savannah River across from Augusta, Georgia. At 136 miles, it is the longest railroad in the world.
- November 11, 1833 Two die in a derailment caused by a overheated axle on the Camden & Amboy at Hightstown, New Jersey. Former US president John Quincy Adams escapes injury, while steamship owner Cornelius Vanderbilt suffers broken ribs and a punctured lung. It is the **first US railroad accident with fatalities among the passengers**.
- Circa 1834 Mill Dam Foundry of Boston, Massachusetts builds a copy of a Stephenson *Planet* type 2-2-0 locomotive, the **first locomotive built in New England**.
- January 31, 1834 Lexington & Ohio is completed from Lexington to Frankfort, Kentucky (see January 1, 1833).
- February 1834 Camden & Amboy begins carrying US mail (see December 5, 1832).
- March 18, 1834 Completion of the Staple Bend Tunnel near Johnstown, Pennsylvania on the Allegheny Portage Railroad, part of the state's Main Line of Public Works (see December 1827). The 901-foot long bore is the **first railroad tunnel in the US**. The date also marks completion of the first track of the 36.7-mile railroad linking canals at Hollidaysburg and Johnstown.
- April 1, 1834 Opening of the state-owned railroad between Philadelphia and Columbia, Pennsylvania, marks the completion of the Main Line of Public Works between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh (see March 18, 1834). A second track is placed in service on October 7th.
- July 4, 1834 The **first railroad in Indiana**, the 1¼ mile Lawrenceburgh & Indianapolis carries



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holiday crowds in its single horse-drawn car.

- April 23, 1834 Chauncy M. Depew is born in Peekskill, New York.
- October 1, 1834 Ross Winans receives a patent for an eight-wheel passenger car.
- November 1834 Postmaster General Barry's report to President Jackson suggests that the government set standards and rates for the transportation of mail by railroad (see February 1834).
- December 1, 1834 Baltimore & Ohio reaches Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Extending 137 miles from Baltimore, it is now the longest railroad in the world.
- Circa 1835 West Point Foundry Association closes its New York City plant, and quitting the locomotive business.
- March 3, 1835 Congress grants right-of-way through public lands, plus additional privileges to the Tallahassee Railroad Company of Florida, in the **first public land grant to a railroad**. Similar grants have previously been used to aid road and canal projects.
- April 10, 1835 Henry Villard is born Ferdinand Heinrich Gustav Hilgard in Bavaria (Germany).
- May 27, 1835 Charles Francis Adams, Jr. is born in Boston.
- June 26, 1835 The Boston & Lowell Railroad opens between its two namesake cities in Massachusetts.
- June 27, 1835 The entire 43½ miles of the Boston & Providence Railroad is completed, the **first railroad in Rhode Island**. Passengers traveling from Boston to New York may connect at Providence with Cornelius Vanderbilt's new steamboat *Lexington*.
- July 1, 1835 Baltimore & Ohio officers and guests tour the newly completed branch to Washington City and the new viaduct over the Patapsco River, named for B&O president Philip E. Thomas. The curving, multi-arch stone bridge is designed by Benjamin H. Latrobe, Jr.
- July 4, 1835 Passenger service begins on the Cleveland & Newburgh Railway, along Euclid Avenue between 101st Street and Public Square. The animal-powered line, built primarily to haul stone and lumber, is the **first railroad in Ohio**.
- September 27, 1835 Phineas Davis, chief engineer of the Baltimore & Ohio, is killed in a derailment which occurs as he and several B&O mechanics test a new locomotive on the Washington branch. Thrown from his perch on the locomotive's tender, Davis is the only fatality.
- Circa 1836 John Plumbe of Dubuque, Iowa begins to campaign for a railroad between Lake Michigan and Oregon.
- January 29, 1836 Opening of the Wilmington & Weldon Railroad, the **first railroad in North**



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Carolina.

- January 29, 1836 Brooklyn & Jamaica Railroad tests its first locomotive on Long Island.
- February 5, 1836 Henry R. Campbell, chief engineer for the Philadelphia, Germantown & Norristown, obtains a patent for a locomotive with a swiveling bogie, or truck, the first 4-4-0 wheel arrangement.
- March 1836 Lexington & Ohio receives its first steam locomotive (see January 31, 1834).
- March 2, 1836 Texas residents vote to declare independence from Mexico.
- April 1836 The railroad car ferry *Susquehanna* is placed in service, crossing the Susquehanna River between Perryville and Havre De Grace, Maryland.
- April 1, 1836 Three die in an accident caused by a broken cable on an inclined plane of the Lexington & Ohio at Frankfort, Kentucky (see March 1836).
- April 18, 1836 Opening of the Brooklyn & Jamaica between South Avenue Ferry in Brooklyn, and Jamaica (see January 29, 1836).
- June 15, 1836 Arkansas becomes a state (see August 10, 1821).
- July 13, 1836 US Patent No. 1 is issued to John Ruggles for an improvement to railroad locomotives(?).
- July 21, 1836 Opening of the Champlain & St. Lawrence Railroad (see February 25, 1832) between St. John's and the St. Lawrence River near LaPrairie, Lower Canada (Quebec), the **first railroad in British North America (Canada)?** (see Circa 1826).
- September 17, 1836 William Jackson Palmer is born near Kinsale, Delaware.
- October 6, 1836 Rensselaer & Saratoga completes the first railroad bridge across the Hudson River at Troy, New York.
- November 1836 Bangor & Piscataquis Canal & Railroad Company opens its rail line between Bangor and Oldtown, the **first railroad in Maine**.
- November 2, 1836 Opening of the Erie & Kalamazoo between Port Lawrence (Toledo), Ohio and Adrian, Michigan Territory. The animal-powered line is the **first railroad in Michigan**.
- December 5, 1836 President Jackson recommends legislation to set terms for mail-handling contracts with railroads (see November 1834).
- December 16, 1836 The Republic of Texas charters the Texas Rail Road, Navigation & Banking Company to construct railroads and canals within the state (see March 2, 1836).



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- January 20, 1837 Erie & Kalamazoo receives its first steam locomotive.
- January 23, 1837 Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac begins service between Richmond and Fredericksburg, Virginia.
- January 26, 1837 Michigan becomes a state (see June 15, 1836).
- February 27, 1837 Illinois legislators vote to spend more than \$10 million on internal improvements, including more than 1,300 miles of state-owned railroads.
- March 21-2, 1837 Michigan appoints a Board of Internal Improvements to direct state-financed canals, roads and railroads.
- April 17, 1837 John Pierpont Morgan is born in Hartford, Connecticut.
- April 22, 1837 The State of Michigan acquires control of the bankrupt Michigan Central Railroad. No part of the road has yet been completed.
- May 1837 Work commences on the first of the Illinois state railroads, between Meridosia and Springfield. A locomotive is ordered from Rogers, Ketchum & Grosvenor of Patterson, New Jersey.
- May 8, 1837 The first 4-4-0 type locomotive, designed by Henry R. Campbell, is constructed by James Brooks in the Philadelphia suburb of Frankford. More than 25,000 engines of this class will be built in the US, the most numerous of any locomotive type.
- May 10, 1837 New York banks temporarily suspend payments in specie, touching off a financial crisis later called the **Panic of 1837**. Over 600 banks will fail this year alone, causing the failure of many railroad companies with them.
- May 16, 1837 The *Public Ledger* reports what appears to be the **first organized work stoppage against a US railroad**. Laborers (of the Camden & Amboy Railroad?) at Bordentown, New Jersey strike to protest an increase in working hours (Commons, vol 1, p.484).
- October 3, 1837 Samuel F.B. Morse receives a US patent for his electric telegraph.
- October 14, 1837 Rogers, Ketchum & Grosvenor ships its first locomotive, the 4-2-0 *Sandusky* to the Mad River & Lake Erie Railroad in Ohio.
- November 19, 1837 Formal opening of the Guines Railroad between Havana and Bejucal, the **first railroad in Cuba**. Cuba becomes the 7th country in the world to have an operating railroad (see August 8, 1830).
- Circa 1838 John Plumbe of Dubuque, Iowa receives \$2,000.00 from the US government to survey a railroad from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi River (see Circa 1836). Plumbe completes the survey, but his route from Milwaukee to Dubuque is never used.



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- February 1838 Start of what may be the **first sleeping car service in the US**, on the Cumberland Valley Railroad between Harrisburg and Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.
- February 3, 1838 Opening of the first 30 miles of the state-owned Michigan Central Railroad between Detroit and Ypsilanti (see April 22, 1837).
- June 29, 1838 Congress orders the Secretary of the Treasury to report on the number, types and uses of steam engines in the US. The report is published as House Document No. 21 of the 25th Congress, listing over 3,000 stationary, marine and locomotive engines.
- June 1838 Matthias Baldwin builds the locomotives *Colon* and *Cervantes*, destined for service in Cuba and the **first US-built export locomotives** (?).
- July 7, 1838 President Van Buren signs a bill designating all railroads as postal routes (see December 5, 1836).
- August? 1838 Baldwin locomotive *Indianapolis*, enroute to the Madison & Indianapolis via New Orleans, is pushed overboard during a storm at sea, presumably to save the ship.
- August 27, 1838 Eastern Railroad opens for traffic from Boston to Salem, Massachusetts.
- September 16, 1838 James J. Hill is born in Rockwood, Ontario.
- October 31, 1838 Start of the **first well-documented sleeping car service in the US** (see February 1838), on the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore between Philadelphia and Baltimore (Dunbar, p. 1044-5). Pangborn, p.114 quotes October 31 advertisement in the Baltimore *Chronicle*: "The cars intended for night traveling between this city and Philadelphia, and which afford berths for twenty-four persons in each, will be placed on the road and used for the first time to-night".
- November 1838 Indiana's first steam locomotive conveys the usual dignitaries over the first nine miles of the Madison & Indianapolis.
- November 15, 1838 Austrian railroad builder Franz Anton Ritter von Gerstner and his wife arrive in New York. Von Gerstner is in the US to collect information on American railroads and canals.
- December 1838 British locomotives begin hauling coal over the Albion Mines Railway, from the mines to New Glasgow, Nova Scotia (see circa 1818).
- December 23, 1838 Opening of the Nashua & Lowell Railroad between Nashua, New Hampshire and Lowell, Massachusetts, the **first railroad in New Hampshire**.
- March 4, 1839 William Frederick Harnden begins operating an express company between New York City and Boston, via rail and steamship.



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- April 1, 1839 Opening of the Madison & Lafayette Railroad between Madison and Vernon, Indiana. The grade up from the Ohio River at Madison is a staggering 5.89 percent, making it the **steepest railroad grade in the US**. This section of the line is operated with cog, or rack assistance.
- July 22, 1839 David H. Moffat, Jr. is born in Washingtonville, New York.
- December 5, 1839 Philadelphia & Reading Railway Company opens its line between the cities of Philadelphia and Reading, Pennsylvania. The locomotive *Gowan and Marx* pulls the first train leaving Reading.
- December 8, 1839 Alexander Johnston Cassatt is born in Pittsburgh.