

## lesson 6 Transportation

### THE RAILROAD COMES TO SACRAMENTO

#### OVERVIEW

This lesson introduces students to the development of the railroads in California and the Sacramento region. *In Lesson 6, students use the Sacramento History Online database at <http://www.sacramentohistory.org>.*

#### STUDENT OBJECTIVES

1. Explain the role of the railroad in connecting California to the rest of the U.S.
2. Recognize the names of early pioneers in railroad history.
3. Use the SHO database to find specific historical information.

#### CALIFORNIA HISTORY STANDARDS

**4.1.3 Physical and human geographic features that define places and regions in California**

**4.4.1 - 4.4.4 California's rise as an agricultural and industrial power**

#### BACKGROUND ARTICLE 6

**The Railroad Comes to Sacramento** (pages 6-5 and 6-6)

#### STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET 6 AND KEY

**The Railroad Comes to Sacramento** (pages 6-7 and 6-8)

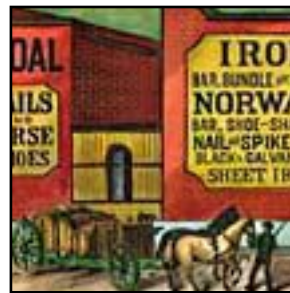
#### DOCUMENTS TO DISCUSS

The documents below relate to railroad travel in the Sacramento area.



**1. Theodore Judah**

[1848]  
Seated portrait.  
Daguerreotype



**2. Store and warehouse of Huntington, Hopkins & Co.**

[1880]  
Store and warehouse of Huntington, Hopkins & Co.



**3. Central Pacific Railroad steam locomotive No. 4**

[188-? ]  
Central Pacific Railroad No. 4, T. D. Judah, placed into service April 9, 1864.



**4. Railroad Shops**

[191-?]  
Southern Pacific Railroad Sacramento Shops complex: interior view of Machine Shop.



**5. C.P. Huntington and 1919 engine**

[ca. 1923]

View of the *C.P. Huntington*, built for the Central Pacific Railroad in 1863, next to Southern Pacific locomotive #3631, built in 1919.



**6. Streetcar near Western Pacific Railroad Depot**

[ca. 1915]

Streetcar stopped at Western Pacific Depot at 19th and K Streets, Sacramento.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Print any of the images shown above that you will use in your discussion, as well as **Student Activity Sheet and Key 6**. (Label the images by their number to identify them in the instructions).

2. Read **Background Article 6**. You may wish to read it to your students or have them read it by themselves. Discuss any questions that they may have.

3. Show and discuss **Document 1, Theodore Judah**. Tell them that this image shows one of the people who helped promote the building of the Transcontinental Railroad. Can anyone identify the person in the photograph? How old do they think the photograph is? (1848) Can anyone identify the type of photograph it is? (*daguerreotype*)

4. **Document 2, Store and warehouse of Huntington, Hopkins and Co**. Tell students that this is the building where the *Big Four* met with Judah. This building was moved to a different block but still stands in Old Sacramento. Ask if any students have visited Old Sacramento.

5. **Document 3, Central Pacific Railroad steam locomotive No. 4**. This image depicts one of the early Central Pacific locomotives. Ask students if they can find the photographer's shadow in this image.

6. **Document 4, Railroad Shops**. There are many images of the railroad shops in the SHO database. Ask students what type of work would be needed to build and maintain trains.

7. **Document 5, C.P. Huntington and 1919 engine**. Ask students to compare and contrast the two locomotives. Which is older? What similarities and differences do they notice about the two? Tell the students that the *C.P. Huntington* (Central Pacific #1) is a famous locomotive that is still on display in Sacramento at the **California State Railroad Museum**. Ask if any students have seen this locomotive.

8. **Document 6, Streetcar near Western Pacific Railroad Depot**. Ask students to identify the type of vehicle. (*streetcar*) Have any students been to a city where streetcars are still used? How were streetcars powered? (*horses and then electricity*) How was this streetcar powered? How can they tell? (*power line*)

9. Give students **Activity Sheet 6: The Railroad Comes to Sacramento** (page 6-7). After they have completed the activity, discuss their answers as a group.

## **FOLLOW-UP**

1. **Search Sacramento History Online** together, using the keyword and advanced searches. Which keywords help you find documents about the railroads?
2. Find three different types of **ephemera** in the database that relate to the railroads.
3. **Write a journal entry** describing a trip that you took on a railroad in the 1870s. How did it feel to ride in a passenger train? Where did you sleep? What did you eat? Whom did you meet, and where were they going? Map the trip as you would have taken it then and today. Calculate the cost of the trip and compare it to the cost of the same trip today.
4. **Find out more** about the life of Chinese laborers who helped build the Transcontinental Railroad. **Write a letter** from a Chinese laborer working on the railroad to someone in China, describing his life in America.
5. **Set up a railroad business** in your classroom. Map the routes that you will establish to move goods and passengers. Describe what resources you will need to build your railroad. Convince investors why your route makes sense. Name your railroad. In the database, find examples of documents that you will need for your railroad business and make your own (example: *advertisements, program from opening celebration*). Role-play a trip, with passengers buying tickets, deciding what to pack, and describing what they see on and from the train.
6. If you live close enough, visit the **California State Railroad Museum** and the other related historical sites in Old Sacramento.

## **REFERENCES AND RESOURCES**

- Blumberg, R. *Full steam ahead: The race to build a transcontinental railroad*. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 1996. (juvenile)
- California State Railroad Museum (museum guide)*, 1999.
- Holden, W. *Sacramento: Excursions into its history and natural world*. Fair Oaks, CA: 2 Rivers Publishing Co., 1988.
- Hunt, R.D. and Arent, W.S. *Oxcart to airplane*. Los Angeles, CA: Powell Publishing Co., 1929
- Steinheimer, R. *California State Railroad Museum: Railroading in California and the West*, Santa Barbara, CA: Albion Publishing Group for the California Department of Parks and Recreation and the California State Railroad Museum, 1991.

## **RELATED LINKS**

### **Brief History of the Sacramento Northern**

(<http://www.people.virginia.edu/~ggg9y/history.html>)

### **Sacramento Valley Railroad**

(<http://www.xphomestation.com/svrr.html>)

### **California State Railroad Museum**

(<http://www.californiastaterailroadmuseum.org>)

### **Central Pacific Railroad Photographic History Museum**

(<http://cprh.org/>)

### **Union Pacific Railroad History**

Includes information on Southern Pacific and Western Pacific Railroads.

(<http://www.uprr.com/aboutup/history/>)

## background 6

## THE RAILROAD COMES TO SACRAMENTO



Completed in 1856, the Sacramento Valley Rail Road was the first passenger railroad in California. It traveled 22 miles from Sacramento to what is now the town of Folsom. To build this railroad, promoter Charles Wilson hired Theodore Judah, an engineer who had helped build a railroad in New York

Once gold was discovered in California, the West coast became more important to the rest of the continent, but it was not easy to get there. At the time of the Gold Rush, it could take five weeks to travel on a wagon train across the country or to take a ship to Central America, walk across the Isthmus of Panama, and catch another ship to San Francisco.

Many people had proposed building a transcontinental railroad that would connect the west and east coasts of the United States. But figuring out how such a railroad would cross the Sierra Nevada Mountains was a big challenge. Theodore Judah was determined to find a place for such a crossing. He explored and surveyed the Sierras and finally discovered a route for the railroad in 1860. Building in this location would require bridges, tunnels, and crossing a mountain summit of 7,000 feet. Judah lobbied the Federal Government in Washington to help build the railroad, with no success. States argued over the route a railroad should take because of questions about slavery and a possible Civil War. When Judah failed to enlist the government's help, he went to a group of merchants and convinced them to sponsor his route. The group included Leland Stanford, Mark Hopkins, Collis Huntington, and Charles Crocker. These four men are now known as the *Big Four*, for their role in building the transcontinental railroad. Stanford also became a governor of California. The Big Four first met with Judah to talk about the railroad at the hardware store Huntington and Hopkins owned in Sacramento. In 1861, the group incorporated the Central Pacific Railroad (CPRR).

Once Judah had lined up investors for his ideas, the government changed its mind. In 1862, President Lincoln signed the Pacific Railroad Act to officially support the building of the transcontinental railroad. In 1863, the first rail was laid in Sacramento for the construction of the Central Pacific. Also that year, the *Gov. Stanford* locomotive, known as Central Pacific No. 1 (and later Southern Pacific No. 3), was placed into service.

The Big Four were often criticized for their business dealings. Because they were paid thousands of dollars more per mile for railroad track that went over the mountains, they had geologists make false reports stating that the Sierra Nevada mountains began much closer to Sacramento than they actually did. Judah disagreed with his partners about such tactics and hoped to buy them out. Unfortunately, he did not even live long enough to see the railroad completed, dying from malaria that he caught in Panama.

To build railroad tracks across the mountains, the CPRR hired thousands of Chinese laborers, some who had worked in mines and others that were brought in from China. The transcontinental railroad was finally completed in 1869, with the joining of track from the Central Pacific from the west and the Union Pacific from the east. A ceremony was held at Promontory Point Utah on May 13, 1869. Two days later, regular service began between Sacramento and Omaha, Nebraska.

Other railroads soon began to develop in California, including the Western Pacific Railroad, which began service to Stockton and San Jose in 1869. In 1870, the Big Four began building another transcontinental railroad to New Orleans, through Southern California. This line was called the Southern Pacific Railroad. The Big Four eventually bought the Western Pacific Railroad, the Yuba Railroad, the California and Oregon Railroad, the California Central Railroad, and many others. They created the Southern Pacific Company in 1884. In 1885, the Southern Pacific Railroad and Central Pacific Railroad leased their holdings to the Southern Pacific Company. Passenger service to Salt Lake City began in 1910, with the Western Pacific Railway.

Early locomotives were powered by steam, created by burning wood or coal. Later trains ran on diesel fuel. Diesel engines began to be used in the 1930s and to replace steam in the 1940s. For a brief time, in the early part of the 20th century, electric railways also were an important means of transportation in California. Some of the electric railways carried passengers within cities, while others traveled between cities such as Marysville and Chico.

Building and taking care of railroad engines, cars, and tracks was a big job. Many people worked in the Sacramento railroad shops, built in 1868 to support the Central Pacific and later the Southern Pacific. During its heyday, the railroads employed as many as one third of all workers in Sacramento.

The Central Pacific station was built on the Sacramento waterfront. From 1879 through the early 1920s, passengers of both the Central and Southern Pacific Railroad used this station. In 1926, a new passenger station was built for the Southern Pacific.

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# THE RAILROAD COMES TO SACRAMENTO

## I. Railroad Puzzle: Which Is Which?

Find each pair of images in the database, using the keyword and advanced searches. Write an *a* or *b* in the blank to identify which picture is which.

1.



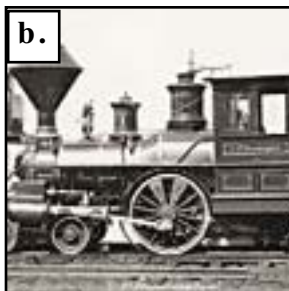
Which shows Crockers Store?

\_\_\_\_\_

Which is the Stanford Warehouse?

\_\_\_\_\_

2.



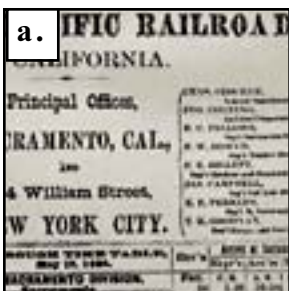
Which is the *C.P. Huntington*?

\_\_\_\_\_

Which is the *Gov. Stanford*?

\_\_\_\_\_

3.



Which shows a Western Pacific menu?

\_\_\_\_\_

Which is a Central Pacific timetable?

\_\_\_\_\_

4.



Which is the Central Pacific railroad station built in 1879?

\_\_\_\_\_

Which is Fair Oaks Bridge Depot?

\_\_\_\_\_



## activity sheet 6

## THE RAILROAD COMES TO SACRAMENTO

## I. Railroad Puzzle: Which Is Which?

Find each pair of images in the database, using the keyword and advanced searches. Write an *a* or *b* in the blank to identify which picture is which.

1.



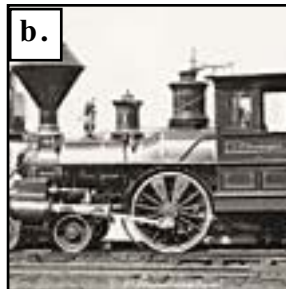
Which shows Crockers Store?

    a    

Which is the Stanford Warehouse?

    b    

2.



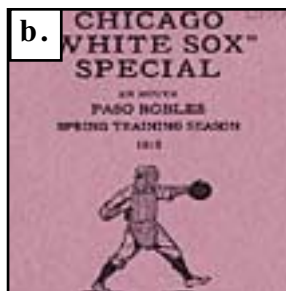
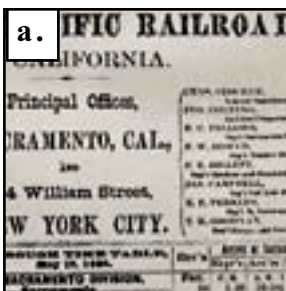
Which is the *C.P. Huntington*?

    b    

Which is the *Gov. Stanford*?

    a    

3.



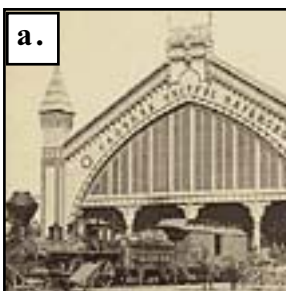
Which shows a Western Pacific menu?

    b    

Which is a Central Pacific timetable?

    a    

4.



Which is the Central Pacific railroad station built in 1879?

    a    

Which is Fair Oaks Bridge Depot?

    b