



Trekking into the West Classroom Presentation: Historical Transportation



A century and a half ago, people in this country traveled around using much different methods of transportation than we typically use today.

Source: Library of Congress



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Source: Library of Congress

They usually did a lot of walking.



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They also rode horses.



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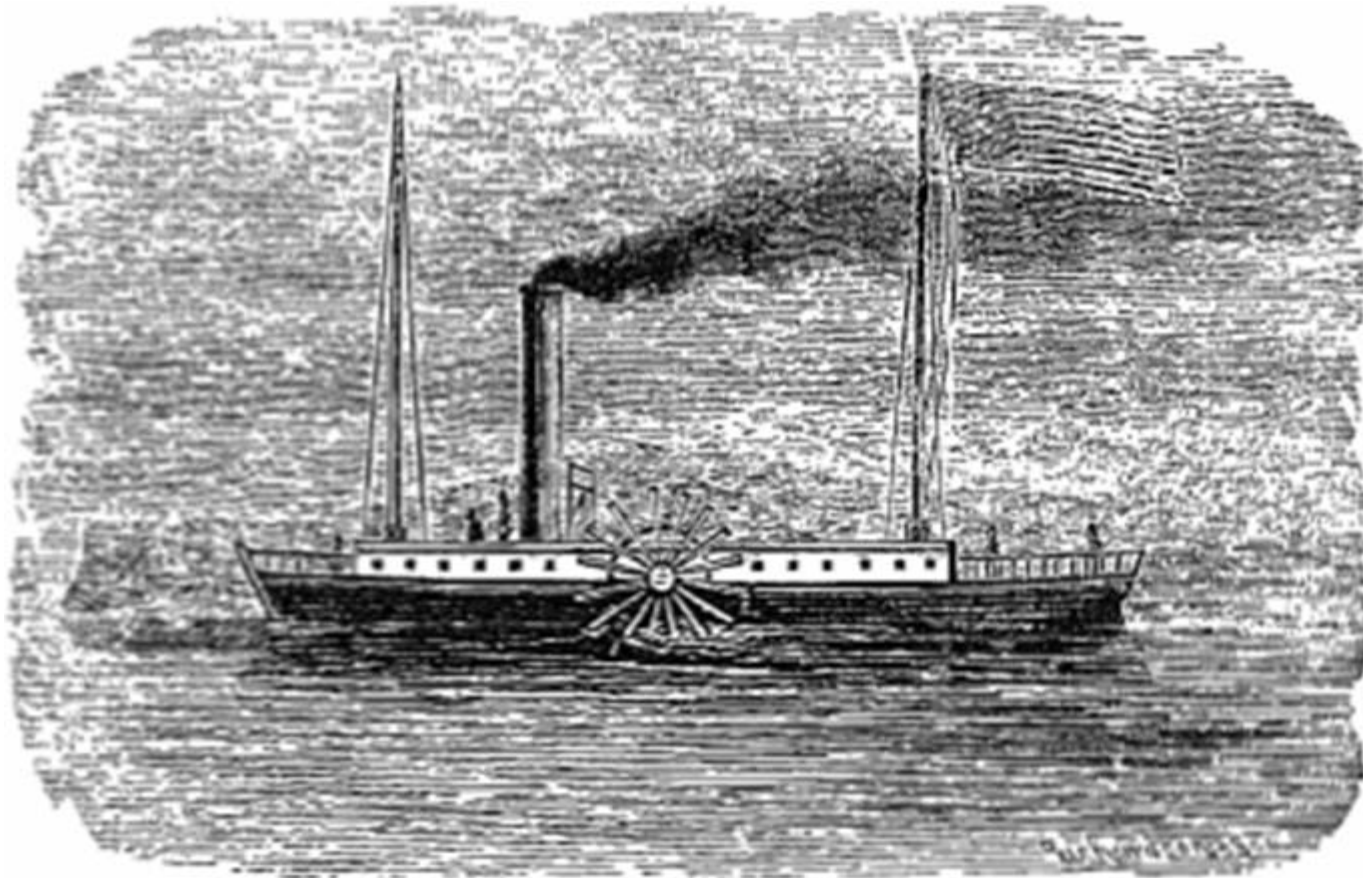
Source: Library of Congress

They rode in wagons drawn by horses, mules, and oxen.

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Source: NY State Library

They could also ride on a paddle-wheel steamboat to riverway destinations like St. Louis or New Orleans.

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Source: Library of Congress

Back then, there were no cars, no planes, and no trains. By taking a look at historical forms of transportation, we can get a better understanding about how they worked and how they were different from what we use today.



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Facts about Horses



- Besides walking, horses were the main mode of transportation in the 19th century.
- The horses needed food and water every day.
- If carrying a rider, they couldn't carry very many additional supplies.
- Though they could travel for many hours a day, the horses needed rest, like their riders.
- If a horse lost a shoe, it needed to be fixed right away.
- You could always trade your horse in for another one – if you had the money.



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Facts about Covered Wagons



- A covered wagon was built to last an entire 2,000 mile trip, though many didn't.
- Things broke, like axles or wheels, and needed to be fixed before traveling again.
- Wagons could hold hundreds of pounds of food and people.
- They provided shelter from rain and dust storms.
- They required a team of oxen, sometimes as many as six, to pull them.
- The oxen needed water, food, and rest between trips.



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Facts about Paddle-Wheel



Source: Library of Congress

- They could carry 20 or more people and tons of cargo.
- The paddle-wheel propelled the boat, though this required continuous use of wood or coal.
- They could run in very shallow water, but often got caught on river snags.
- They only went as far as the river could take them. To go further inland, they relied on man-made canals, or passengers joined a wagon train.
- Sometimes the boats caught on fire from the sparks from their smoke-stacks.
- For the most part, passengers were sheltered from the weather.



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“Into the West” Game

Follow these guidelines to play the game “Into the West” with your group.

Everyone starts in St. Louis, Missouri with the destination of Omaha City, Nebraska. This 560-mile journey is one of the first legs of the California-Oregon trails.

- Each team automatically travels 100 miles in every round.
- In each round, teams will draw a “Trek Card” to see what happened to them during their travels. Some rounds will yield good travel days, where a team will gain miles. Other rounds will yield bad travel days, in which a team will lose miles.
- Teams need to keep a running tally of how many miles they log. If their Trek Card shows they gained miles, it should be added to the total tally. If their Trek Card shows they lost miles, they should deduct those miles from their total tally.
- The team that makes it to Omaha first wins the race!