

W A T E R , R A I L S A N D R O A D S

TRANSPORTATION CONNECTS AGRICULTURE, PLACES AND PEOPLE

Long before white settlers arrived and long before statehood, who was here? For hundreds of years the Ojibwe (Anishinabe) and the Dakota Indians had lived in villages along Minnesota's lakes and rivers. Settling by rivers gave them the water they needed for survival. It gave them fish. It gave them a ready route for travel when they moved for food or gatherings with other Indians. They went by canoe, horseback or foot, carrying all they needed.

When trappers, explorers and early settlers came, they also traveled and settled by waterways. Lake Superior, the Mississippi and other rivers were main travel and trade routes.

In the early 1820s Fort Snelling was built on the hill where the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers meet.

By 1823 the first steamboat plowed up the Mississippi to the fort. Can you imagine the amazement the Indians felt? The movement from muscle-powered to fuel-powered transportation had begun.



Photo Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

NEWCOMERS POUR IN

By the mid 1830s, steamboats full of immigrants and settlers arrived. They came for new land and new lives. Ox carts and wagonloads of settlers came, too. They all had to decide where to live. Many folks settled near the river. Others spread out into the country beyond. With axes and oxen, horses and simple tools they broke sod and built farms. John Deere's steel plow was invented in 1837. The plow made it easier for farmers to break the tough prairie sod. Imagine you are a new arrival back then. How will you decide where to live? What will you need in order to survive? How will you get those things?



Photo Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

People arrived by steamboat, barge, stagecoach and Conestoga "prairie schooner" wagons. Between 1849 and statehood in 1858, Minnesota was the fastest-growing place in the U.S.! Most settlers became farmers, making a living off this rich land. They grew crops to eat plus crops to sell. Imagine you are a farmer. What do you have to sell? Who will buy your products? How will you get your products to your buyers? Once again, people turned to the rivers. The rivers carried wheat and other crops across the growing country.

In 1862 railroads arrived in Minnesota. Trains would change transportation in big ways. Still, until the 1880s, riverboat traffic thrived.

RIVER OF GOODS

Rivers brought many things people needed as they settled in new places. Solve the puzzle to see nine items that moved on the waterways.

S	T	O	V	E	S	P	A	W
S	J	S	U	G	A	R	O	H
F	U	R	N	I	T	U	R	E
F	N	O	C	L	O	T	H	A
U	I	M	F	L	O	U	R	T
R	E	B	M	U	L	O	M	Y
S	D	P	A	N	S	B	N	B



Pre to early 1800s

American Indians and early explorers traveled mainly on foot, by canoe or horseback

1823

First steamboat to Fort Snelling

1849

Minnesota becomes a territory

1858

Minnesota becomes a state

1862

First train to St Anthony

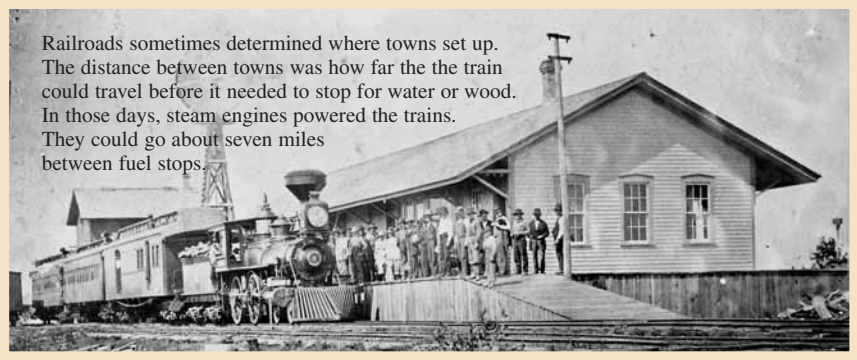
1880

Riverboat traffic peaks

Continued next issue!

TRANSPORTATION CONNECTS AGRICULTURE, PLACES AND PEOPLE

Rivers, lakes and rough wagon trails were main ways to travel in Minnesota 150 years ago. Early towns and cities sprang up along the Mississippi and its tributaries. In the early 1850s people began to clamor for railroads. The first train puffed into St. Anthony (now Minneapolis) in 1862, connecting it with its sister city of St. Paul.



Railroads sometimes determined where towns set up. The distance between towns was how far the train could travel before it needed to stop for water or wood. In those days, steam engines powered the trains. They could go about seven miles between fuel stops.

Photos Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

RAILS ACROSS THE LAND

As the Civil War ended in 1865, Minnesota had 22 miles of railroad. Workers laid track as fast as they could. They barely kept ahead of the arriving trains! Thanks to trains, more newcomers could settle inland instead of mainly along the waterways.

By 1880 Minnesota Territory had more than 3,000 miles of tracks. Rails served almost every town. Trains brought new settlers, mail, news and goods faster and more often than ever before. Imagine how exciting it was to hear the train whistle coming! The population kept growing, and trains made it happen.

By 1883 the Northern Pacific completed its road to the Pacific Ocean. Now Minnesota was connected to the west coast!

FROM FARM TO MARKET

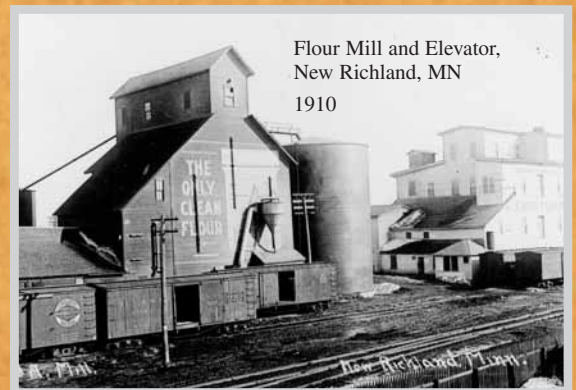
Before trains, farms were small. Farmers who grew more crops than they needed sold them to people nearby. The train made it possible to buy and sell with people far and wide. This was good news for farmers. They could reach many more buyers. The more they grew, the more they could sell. The more they sold, the better off they'd be. They bought more land, farms got bigger and machines were invented to help with farm work.

As railroads crossed the land, elevators soon dotted the horizon. Farmers loaded grain into horse-drawn wagons and hauled it to the nearest elevator. The elevator owner bought and stored the grain. He sold it to flour mills and other customers. Then it was loaded into boxcars and shipped to buyers everywhere.

FASTER AND FARTHER

People could travel from Lake Benton to St. Paul in less than a day. They could travel all the way to California by rail and get there weeks sooner than by horseback or wagon. Mail and supplies arrived faster than ever before.

Railroads were king from 1880 until 1920. In your next AgMag, you'll read how roads and highways carried people and agriculture faster yet.



Flour Mill and Elevator, New Richland, MN 1910

Why are they called elevators? Grain is lifted in order to load it into railroad boxcars. Conveyors lift grain to an overhead system of belts and chutes that carries it into different storage bins. From the high storage bins, grain drops by gravity into waiting railroad cars.

What's the railroad connection?

The Homestead Act of 1862, a new law, gave up to 160 acres of land to settlers who would build a house on it and farm there for five years.



1860

Land travel was mainly by horseback or animal-drawn wagons and coaches



1862

First Train (St. Paul to St. Anthony)



1880

Passenger and freight trains crossed the state



1883

Railroads reached the Pacific Ocean



1900-1920

Trains reign but automobiles and trucks appear

Continued next issue!

TRANSPORTATION CONNECTS AGRICULTURE, PLACES AND PEOPLE

Early Minnesotans were used to horses, barges and trains. Imagine how things changed in the early 1900s when cars came along! People could travel faster, farther and with more freedom than ever before — but they needed good roads to do it.

From the early days of statehood in 1858, the Minnesota Legislature was involved in road building. The State is still involved. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) builds roads and bridges. It oversees airfreight and passenger carriers, ports and waterways, railroads and public transportation (light rail, buses, bicycling and other ways we travel).

MODERN MOVERS

Modern railways, highways, air routes and two main water routes — the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes — carry millions of tons of Minnesota ag products to consumers around the world today.



HIGHWAYS – Have you seen trucks heaped high with corn or peas rumbling down Minnesota’s rural highways at harvest time? Trucks take farm products from fields to elevators, processing plants and harbors. Our excellent network of roads has helped many Minnesota towns become major centers for moving farm products to market. Good roads have affected where towns flourish and grow. How do the roads where you live make a difference in your town?



RAILROADS – Have you ever counted a train with more than 100 rail cars? They’re common here. Railroads can link elevators and lake or river ports, or take products all the way from elevators to consumers. Minnesota soybeans bound for Mexico start at elevators and ride the rails the whole way through.



AIRPLANES – Air travel is the most expensive way to move products, but it’s also the fastest. Speed is important to keep things fresh when they come long distances. A flower stall at the Mpls. St. Paul International Airport shows the clock time from fields in Ecuador to our airport. It’s less than 24 hours! Bulbs come to us from the Netherlands; seafood from Seattle. Avocados, bananas, melons and cucumbers come from the Dominican Republic and mushrooms from France and South Africa. Pineapples come from Mexico and Hawaii; seeds for experimental plants come from around the world. Fare from the air brings variety to our lives!



RIVERS AND PORTS – The Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers carry goods and products between the Midwest and the world. Dry beans from Renville County and wheat from the Red River Valley are just two crops that travel by water to ports around the world.



The Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River are waterways that link our landlocked state to the Atlantic Ocean nearly 2,700 miles away. Grain, iron ore and coal make up 91 percent of cargo leaving Duluth Seaway Port for faraway places. Field crops and forest products also move through the port each year.

Photos from Top to Bottom Courtesy: Truck-Minnesota Trucking Association. All others University of Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station



1903

Kitty Hawk first flight



1920

Early trucks appear



Late 1900's and Today



Land, air and water transportation are everywhere