

1. box2>The policy which has been pursued has given us [the United States] the most efficient railway service and the lowest rates known in the world; but its recognized benefits have been attained at the cost of the most unwarranted discriminations, and its effect has been to build up the strong at the expense of the weak, to give the large dealer an advantage over the small trader, to make capital count for more than individual credit and enterprise, to concentrate business at great commercial centers, to necessitate combinations and aggregations of capital, to foster monopoly, to encourage the growth and extend the influence of corporate power, and to throw the control of the commerce of the country more and more into the hands of the few....

Source: United States Senate, Select Committee on Interstate Commerce, 1886/box2>

According to this document, how did the railroad owners engage in unfair business practices?

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2. box2>...Like information technology [IT] today, railroads in the second half of the 19th century promised to revolutionize society—shrinking distances, dramatically lowering costs, opening new markets, and increasing competition. Railroads were the great transformational technology of the age and promised to change everything. Like IT today, railroads sucked up the bulk of the world's investment capital, creating a speculative bubble that ultimately burst—blowing away much of the capital that investors had poured into the industry. While many investors lost their shirts, railroads did, in the end, deliver the revolution promised. Costs came down, living standards rose, markets expanded, and geography shrank. In fact, the railroad infrastructure, built with so much sweat, blood, and money a century ago, is still serving us today....

Source: Barry Sheehy, "Train Wrecks: Why Information Technology Investments Derail,"

CPC Econometrics/box2>

According to Barry Sheehy, what were two effects of railroads on the American economy?

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3. box2> ... That year (1877) there came a series of tumultuous strikes by railroad workers in a dozen cities; they shook the nation as no labor conflict in its history had done.

It began with wage cuts on railroad after railroad, in tense situations of already low wages (\$1.75 a day for brakemen working twelve hours), scheming and profiteering by the railroad companies, deaths and injuries among the workers—loss of hands, feet, fingers, the crushing of men between cars.

At the Baltimore & Ohio station in Martinsburg, West Virginia, workers determined to fight the wage cut went on strike, uncoupled the engines, ran them into the roundhouse, and announced no more trains would leave Martinsburg until the 10 percent cut [in pay] was canceled. A crowd of support gathered, too many for the local police to disperse. B. & O. officials asked the governor for military protection, and he sent in militia. A train tried to get through, protected by the militia, and a striker, trying to derail it, exchanged gunfire with a militiaman attempting to stop him. The striker was shot in his thigh and his arm. His arm was amputated later that day, and nine days later he died.

Six hundred freight trains now jammed the yards at Martinsburg. The West Virginia governor applied to newly elected President Rutherford Hayes for federal troops, saying the state militia was insufficient. In fact, the militia was not totally reliable, being composed of many railroad workers. Much of the U.S. Army was tied up in Indian battles in the West. Congress had not appropriated money for the army yet, but J. P. Morgan, August Belmont, and other bankers now offered to lend money to pay army officers (but no enlisted men). Federal troops arrived in Martinsburg, and the freight cars began to move....

Source: Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States*,

Harper Collins Publishers/box2>

According to this passage, why did the railroad workers go on strike in 1877?

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4. Base your answer to the following question on box2>. . . Sec.2. *And be it further enacted*, That the right of way through the public lands be, and the same is hereby, granted to said company [The Union Pacific Railroad Company] for the construction of said railroad and telegraph line; and the right, power, and authority is hereby given to said company to take from the public lands adjacent to the line of said road, earth, stone, timber, and other materials for the construction thereof; said right of way is granted to said railroad to the extent of two hundred feet in width on each side of said railroad where it may pass over the public lands, including all necessary grounds for stations, buildings, workshops, and depots, machine shops, switches, side tracks, turn-tables, and water stations. The United States shall extinguish as rapidly as may be, the Indian titles to all lands falling under the operation of this act and required for the said right of way and grants hereinafter made.

Sec.3. *And be it further enacted*, That there be, and is hereby, granted to the said company, for the purpose of aiding in the construction of said railroad and telegraph line, and to secure the safe and speedy transportation of the mails, troops, munitions of war, and public stores thereon, every alternate section of public land, designated by odd numbers, to the amount of five alternate sections per mile on each side of said railroad, on the line thereof, and within the limits of ten miles on each side of said road, not sold, reserved, or otherwise disposed of by the United States, and to which a preemption or homestead claim may not have attached, at the time the line of said road is definitely fixed: *Provided*, That all mineral lands shall be excepted from the operation of this act; but where the same shall contain timber, the timber thereon is hereby granted to said company. And all such lands, so granted by this section, which shall not be sold or disposed of by said company within three years after the entire road shall have been completed, shall be subject to settlement and preemption, like other lands, at a price not exceeding one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre, to be paid to said company. . . .

— The Pacific Railroad Act, July 1, 1862/box2>

a. According to this document, what did the federal government give the Union Pacific Railroad Company to help them construct the railroad and the telegraph line?

b. According to this document, how did the Pacific Railroad Act help the United States expand westward?

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5. Base your answer to the following question on box2>...During the post-Civil War decades, such wartime Republican initiatives as the Homestead Act and the Morrill Act for endowing agricultural colleges bore valuable economic fruit in the form of greater agricultural productivity. Federal railroad legislation had even weightier consequences. By 1871, under the terms of the Pacific Railroad Act and subsequent measures, the federal government had given private railroad companies over 130 million acres of land in the trans-Mississippi West, about one-tenth of the entire public domain. Individual states contributed a total of forty-nine million additional acres from their own public lands. This huge mass of real estate—larger than the state of Texas—was a vital source of funds for the railroads. People with savings—especially middle-class folk—who would not buy the stocks and bonds of the railroads, did buy their land. Thousands were attracted west to take up farms in the grants of the Northern Pacific, Union Pacific, Burlington, and other land-rich railroads. Their contribution to the roads' coffers was immense. The average price at which the railroads sold their land was about \$3.30 an acre, bringing the promoters about \$435 million.

Source: Irwin Unger, *These United States: The Questions of Our Past*, Little, Brown, 1978/box2>

According to Irwin Unger, what was one impact of federal land policy on the United States economy?

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6. box2>It was with a shock of abhorrence, therefore, that they discovered in 1871 the presence of railroad surveyors running a line through the valley of the Yellowstone. With Sitting Bull's approval, the young warriors immediately began a campaign of harassment, first letting the intruders know that they were not wanted there, and then driving them away. The reason the surveyors had come into this area was that the owners of the Northern Pacific Railroad had decided to change its route, abandoning the line through previously ceded lands and invading unceded lands without any consultation with the Indians. In 1872, the surveyors accompanied by a small military force came back to the Yellowstone country, and again Sitting Bull's followers drove them away...

Source: Dee Brown, *Hear That Lonesome Whistle Blow*, Henry Holt and Co./box2>

According to this document, why were Native American Indians hostile to the surveyors?

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7. box2>If nineteenth-century Monterey County owed much to the coming of the railroads, Santa Cruz County owed everything, for railroads constructed during the 1870s tied together the isolated communities along the north coast of Monterey Bay and launched an era of unparalleled development...

Between 1875 and 1880 the Chinese built three separate railroads, laid forty-two miles of track, and drilled 2.6 miles of tunnels to stitch Santa Cruz County together and attach it permanently to the world beyond the Santa Cruz Mountains. The Chinese contributed not only their muscle and sweat, but their lives. At least fifty Chinese were killed in accidents while building those railroads. For every mile of railroad, one Chinese died....

Chinese railroad workers on the Santa Cruz Railroad worked six ten-hour days a week and were paid one dollar a day. Two dollars per week was deducted from their pay for food, while expenses such as clothing and recreation chipped away at the remaining four dollars so that they averaged three dollars per week profit....

Source: Sandy Lydon, *Chinese Gold: The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region*,  
Capitola Book Company/box2>

a According to this document, how did railroad development help Monterey and Santa Cruz counties?

b Based on this document, state **one** working condition the Chinese experienced as they built the railroads.

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