

Transportation

6 Articles

Check articles you have read:

☐

Steamboats and Railroads

91 words

☐

Horses, Carriages, and Wagons

113 words

☐

Helping Drivers See Safely

108 words

☐

Building a Railroad to Cross the Country

112 words

☐

When Will We Have Flying Cars?

203 words

☐

Building a Better Bicycle

198 words

Steamboats and Railroads

By ReadWorks



Long ago, the United States was new. People traveled by foot and horse. They also traveled in boats powered by paddles or wind. Those trips took a long time.

Then steam engines were invented. The steam engine used the power of boiling water. That invention made it possible for boats to go much faster.

Before long, steam engines were used in railroad trains, too. These trains could go even faster than steamboats. Now people could travel long distances more quickly. Steamboats and railroads made it easier for Americans to go places!

Horses, Carriages, and Wagons

By ReadWorks



Many years ago, people used horses to get from one place to another. Sometimes, people rode on the backs of the horses. Other times, horses were used to pull carriages.

The carriages carried people where they wanted to go. The roads were made mostly of dirt. The ride was bumpy. But the people got where they wanted to go.

When people wanted to move things, they used wagons. The wagons carried food, milk, ice, and other things. Horses pulled the wagons too. A driver held the reins and guided the horses. That was long ago.

Today, some people still use horses, carriages, and wagons. But now many people use trains, cars, and planes.

Helping Drivers See Safely

By ReadWorks

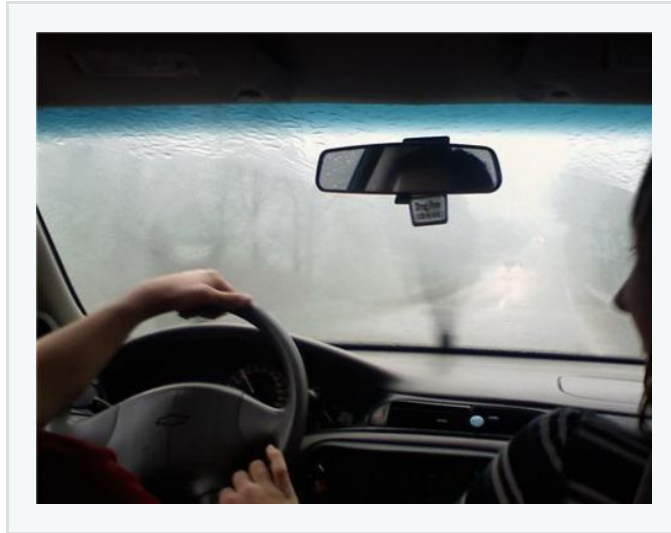


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Long ago, Mary Anderson took a ride in a streetcar. It was a rainy day. The driver could not see through the front window. He had to stop the streetcar and go outside to clean the window. When he came back, he was all wet.

Anderson thought of a way to clean the window from inside the car. She made a handle with a rubber blade at the end. The driver could move the handle from inside a car. The handle pushed the blade across the window. She called her invention the windshield wiper. Now people stay safe and dry when driving in the rain!

Building a Railroad to Cross the Country

By ReadWorks



Photo Credit: Library of Congress

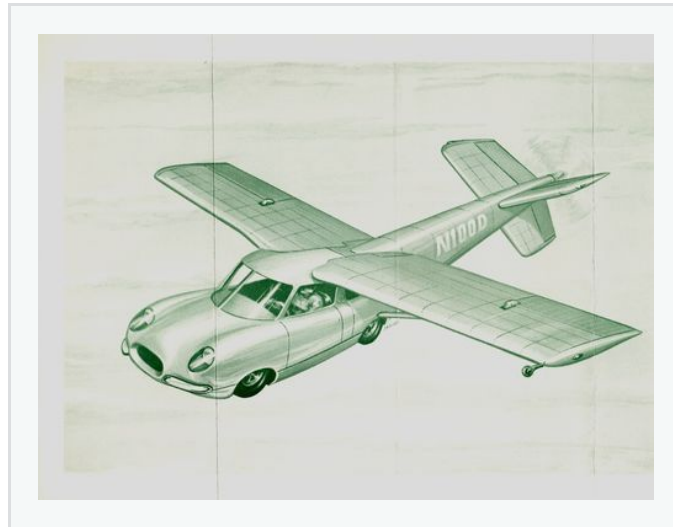
Over 200 years ago, it was difficult to travel across the United States. There were a few railroad trains, but none of those trains crossed the country. People traveling across the United States went by horse and wagon. It took months to travel that way.

So 150 years ago, people started building a new railroad. This railroad would connect the East Coast to the West Coast. Building the railroad was hard work. People worked in bad weather. They had to blast holes in mountains to make tunnels.

The railroad took six years to complete. When it was done, people could travel across the country much more easily.

When Will We Have Flying Cars?

By Linda Ruggieri



People have been trying to build a flying car for a long time. So far, no one has been able to get a car off the ground safely. But engineers keep trying!

One problem is that flying cars need wings. The wings must be designed so they will not stick out into other lanes of the road. Engineers are looking for solutions to that problem.

Two kinds of flying cars are being developed that may solve the problem. One type is called *the Transition*. It has rotating blades that spin and lift the car. Those blades fold flat against the sides when the car is on the ground.

Another kind is named the *Skycar*. It has large propellers. These propeller wings fold up and can be packed in the car's trunk.

Flying cars will not just fly up from the road. They will have to take off from an airport runway. Still, some people are eager to have one of their own. Nobody is sure when flying cars will be available, but one company already has a hundred customers waiting for one.

So fasten your seat belts, and get ready for takeoff. Someday, cars may be on the road *and* in the air!

Building a Better Bicycle

By Linda Ruggieri



Bicycles have a long, interesting history. The first bicycle was developed more than two hundred years ago. Early bicycles, however, did not look like today's bikes.

One of the first bicycles was called the hobby horse. It was made of wood! People rode by pushing their feet along on the ground.

Later, a bicycle that had pedals and metal tires was invented. It was not comfortable. It was called the boneshaker. Inventors kept working to make bicycles more comfortable

Next, the high wheeler was developed. It had a very big wheel in the front. This bicycle was not easy to ride, because the rider sat high up on the bike. The rider could be badly hurt in a fall.

Then bicycles began to have two wheels that were the same size. Those bikes looked more like bicycles today.

More than one hundred years ago, bicycles began to have rubber tires filled with air. That was a solution to the problem of a bumpy ride. The new tires made riding smoother.

Today, children's bicycles and racing bikes are popular. People ride bikes to get exercise. Bicycling is safer, too. Now people wear helmets, and bikes have reflectors on them.