

1850s train tracks crisscrossed the Northeast Southeast and Great Lakes area

Between 1865 and 1890 the number of miles of railroad track jumped nearly fivefold.

federal government helped giving the railroads millions of acres of land

Cheap steel also helped the railroads expand

Congress authorized two companies to build rail lines to the West Coast

six and a half years to complete the first transcontinental railroad—one that crossed the country