

CONCLUSION -

PHOTO: RR.

PHOTO: PROMONTORY POINT 1869.

PHOTO: RR.\WAGONS\PIONEERS.

NARRATOR: By the early 1850's several short line railroads had connected to form fully integrated rail systems. The New York Central Railroad was formed from several railroads between Buffalo and Albany. An all rail route from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh was completed in 1854. By 1873, four, fully integrated trunk-line railroads connected Chicago and St. Louis with the East. The first inter-continental rail-line was completed when the Union Pacific and Central Pacific Railroads met at Promontory Point, Utah May 10th 1869.

The completion of a rail system that linked the Atlantic Coast with the Pacific, with many short lines tying in from all directions; meant that it was no longer necessary to travel across the country by wagon, horseback, or foot. Indeed, the arrival of the railroad in the West effectively ended the era of the wild, western frontier. The railroad is a metaphor for the taming of the West.

It would no longer be necessary to endure the months of gruelling travel, the sickness, deprivation, and death that was the pioneer experience previous to the arrival of the railroad. The trip could be taken in the relative comfort of a rail car and completed in a matter of days or weeks rather than months. Plenty of food was available and sickness and death were the exception rather than the rule.