

THE ORPHAN TRAINS

Live footage of trains: Reel 914 14:09:17

Railroads played a hand in the fates of individual pioneers as well as towns.

Illinois flyer -- Reel #509

Orphaned children had been emigrating to the West since 1854 aboard so-called "Orphan Trains." And they had no say in the matter.

Slow pan along Kansas train w/kids -- #507, 7:15:05

NYC street -- Reel 504, 4:11:30

Many children in eastern cities were left homeless due to the death of their parents. These orphans often ended up in asylums, jails, or the streets.

Shot of NYC street: LaCoNat His with c/u kids faces - Reel 506, 6:12:27

Concerned organizations and Children's Aid Societies enacted programs to find better lives for these children, better lives out west.

George Panzer - Reel 506 6:05:48

From 1854 to 1929, over 100,000 orphans would ride "Orphan Trains" to an unknown future in the West.

Robert Panzer - Reel 506 6:06:44