

Name _____

Date _____



The Transcontinental Railroad

It was the 1820s—USA before the 50 states,
A young America coming up in a growing stage.
Started building roads and going all over the Northeast,
But we were thinking more reach, taking over the distant places.
Transcontinental railroad, before the Wrights were airborne,
America's dream to take over territory:
Manifest Destiny, thought it was our right to control it.
We wanted more, but how we did it is a scary story.
It was the Homestead Act of 1862,
Persuaded Americans to pack their bags and make the moves.
We called the West the frontier,
And then we passed another act the same year; Pacific Railway Act was unclear.
Two different companies were given the authority
To build the rails across the country. You would think that normally
They'd work together, instead they fought against each other
For the money and power, then the country was ours.

The Transcontinental from the East to West,
We conquered the frontier, but we'll never forget
That many worked hard; it was life or death.
America the beautiful, we must confess.
The Transcontinental from the East to West,
We conquered the frontier, but we'll never forget:
Displacing all the Natives, although we were guests.
America the beautiful, we must confess.

Yeah, the Union Pacific, the Central Pacific,

Two companies hired to lay the tracks through the country,
But never sat and discussed a meeting place in the middle.
So from east to west they raced to lay more roads for the money.
The Central had to build around the mountains, many miles in fact.
Sierra Nevada—70 wide if you counted—it was hard.
Through the rock, using TNT to blow the terrain,
A lot of danger, workers fought through the pain.
At Central, many immigrants from China died for their wage.
And at Pacific, those in charge were fraudulent, the robber barons.
They were tycoons conflicting with the Natives who stayed:
Sioux, Arapaho and Cheyenne, the tribes displaced.
But in 1869, President Grant was inaugurated,
Threatened both Union and Pacific to cut off their payment
If they didn't find a meeting point and stop competing,
So they met at Promontory Summit in May and brought completion.
The transcontinental rails changed life;
People got to travel, ship goods day and night.
Frontier was over; people moved over;
America expanded; hard work brought results.
But never forget the pain, 'cause many lost homes,
Families and peace, and life would never, ever be the same.
Native Americans moved, but they were born and raised
And still fight for the change up until this day.

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