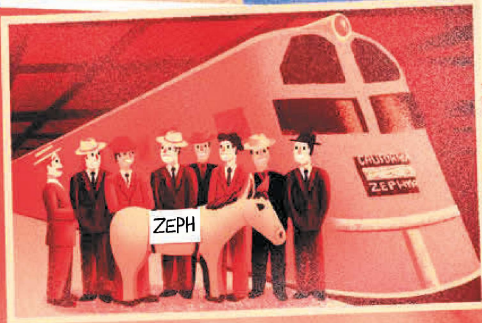


Boy scouts helped patrol stations and level crossings to help the Zephyr's "dawn-to-dusk" dash.

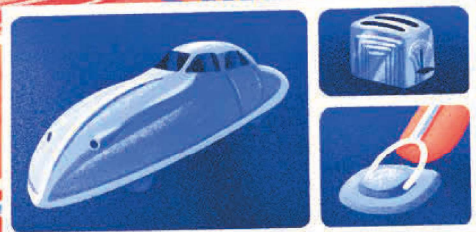


PIONEER ZEPHYR

The gleaming silver Pioneer Zephyr was the first train to run part of the transcontinental railroad at speed. In 1934, it travelled from Chicago to Denver in a record "dawn-to-dusk" dash of 13 hours. The Zephyr's curves and long lines were part of a design movement called Streamline Moderne, which captured America's imagination. Soon, Zephyr-mania swept the country. Cars and aeroplanes were renamed "zephyr" to cash in on the phenomenon.



The first passengers on the Pioneer Zephyr included a mascot - a small donkey named Zeph!



In the style of the Zephyr, even things that didn't move much were made to look streamlined, such as buildings, toasters, and vacuum cleaners.

Zephyr means "A wind to the West".

CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR

The train that runs the Chicago to California route today is called the California Zephyr. Mainland America is so big it's divided into four time zones - Eastern, Central, Mountain, and Pacific time - and on this journey passengers will reset their watch twice. It takes only four-and-a-half hours to fly from Chicago to San Francisco, but every year more than 400,000 people travel the 51 hours on the California Zephyr. With windows on every side, observation carriages allow passengers to take in the sights as they clatter across the country.



The end of a railway under construction is called a railhead.

The line was built in pieces by different companies. They were paid by the mile, so raced against each other to lay the longest distance. Cutting through rough terrain was achieved by using dynamite - once, the two companies raced to blow up the same mountain.

From snowy mountains to scorching deserts, the line copes with all weathers and terrains. In Nevada, hot sun can warp the rails, during Chicago winters, frozen rails are set on fire to melt the ice on them, and in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, snow sheds help to prevent trains being buried by avalanches.