

100 — WESTWARD HO! TRAILS AND TRAVELLERS —

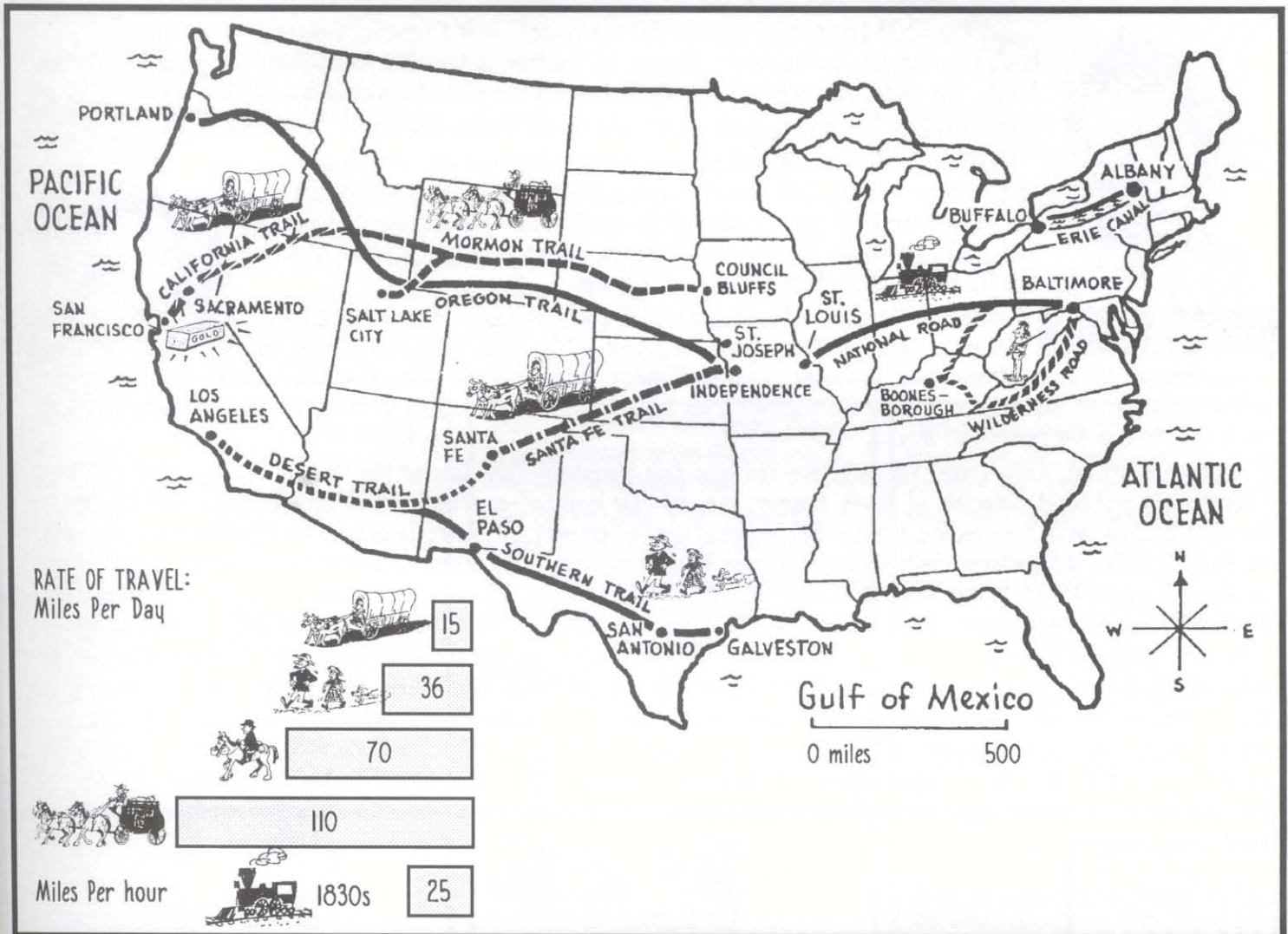
"I am listening to the tread of unnumbered millions to come."—Henry Clay, putting his ear to the ground on the Wilderness Road

1492

1775

1860

2000



WESTWARD ROUTES

Imagine the United States with thousands of Indian paths but no roads. Early settlers followed these paths—many formed first by buffalo—and gradually widened them for wagons and stagecoaches. Some they lined with stones. Others remained primitive; wagon drivers caught on tree stumps left in the way would exclaim, "I'm stumped."

■ **WILDERNESS TRAIL**—In 1775 Daniel Boone and a crew of "30 guns" hacked the first highway into the West. They followed the ancient Iroquois-Cherokee Warrior Path through the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky.

■ **NATIONAL ROAD**—In 1818 the federal government completed this crushed-stone road. Unlike most trails, it had a scattering of inns.

■ **ERIE CANAL**—In 1825 this spectacular engineering feat opened a trade route from the Great Lakes to the Hudson River and Atlantic Ocean, making New York City the nation's leading commercial center. (Thomas Jefferson, said of the Erie Canal proposal: "Why, sir, you talk of making a canal 350 miles through the wilderness—it is little short of madness....") Canal building continued, in part because Robert Fulton's steamboat (1807) proved water travel could be efficient.

■ **SANTA FE TRAIL**—Santa Fe, founded by the Spanish in 1610, was closed to "Americanos" until 1821 when Mexico won its independence from Spain and opened Santa Fe to American traders. William Bucknell led the first American wagon train into Santa Fe in 1822. Today, on the edge of the city, you can see wagon ruts carved by Bucknell, Kit Carson, and other adventurers.

■ **OREGON TRAIL**—In 1841 settlers lured by fertile land began trekking 2,000 miles to the Oregon country, jointly occupied by the United States and Britain since 1818. In 1843 they established a provisional government and demanded annexation to the U.S.

■ **MORMON TRAIL**—In 1847 Brigham Young led the first of 15,000 Mormons, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to Utah as a haven from persecution. Utah became a state in 1896, after the Mormons agreed to give up polygamy.

■ **CALIFORNIA TRAIL**—Gold, discovered in 1848 at Sutter's Fort near Sacramento, drew a "goldrush" of people racing across the continent to strike it rich—80,000 by 1849. Called "forty-niners," they soon wrote a state constitution and sought U.S. annexation.