

Questions 41-50

During the heyday of the railroads, when America's rail system provided the bulk of the country's passenger and freight transportation, various types of railroad cars were in service to accomplish the varied tasks handled by the railroads. One type of car that was not available for public use prior to the Civil War, however, was a sleeping car; ideas for sleeping cars abounded at the time, but these ideas were unworkable. It unfortunately took the death of a president to make the sleeping car a viable reality.

Cabinet-maker George M. Pullman had recognized the demand for sleeping cars and had worked on developing experimental models of sleeping cars in the decade leading up to the Civil War. However, in spite of the fact that he had made successful test runs on the Chicago and Alton Railroads with his models, he was unable to sell his idea because his models were too wide and too high for existing train stations and bridges. In 1863, after spending time working as a storekeeper in a Colorado mining town, he invested his savings of twenty thousand dollars, a huge fortune at that time and all the money that he had in the world, in a luxurious sleeping car that he named the Pioneer. Pullman and friend Ben Field built the Pioneer on the site of the present-day Chicago Union Station. For two years, however, the Pioneer sat on a railroad siding, useless because it could not fit through train stations and over bridges.

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Following President Lincoln's assassination in 1865, the state of Illinois, Lincoln's birthplace, wanted to transport the presidential casket in the finest fashion possible. The Pullman Pioneer was the most elegant car around, in order to make the Pullman part of the presidential funeral train in its run from Springfield to Chicago, the state cut down station platforms and raised bridges in order to accommodate the luxurious railway car. The Pullman car greatly impressed the funeral party, which included Lincoln's successor as president, General Ulysses S. Grant, and Grant later requested the Pioneer for a trip from Detroit to Chicago. To satisfy Grant's request for the Pioneer, the Michigan Central Railroad made improvements on its line to accommodate the wide car, and soon other railroads followed. George Pullman founded the Pullman Palace Car Company in partnership with financier Andrew Carnegie and eventually became a millionaire.

41. Which of the following best states the main idea of the passage?

43. It can be inferred from the passage that before the Civil War, sleeping cars

(A) America's railroads used to provide much of the country's transportation.

(B) President Lincoln's assassination in 1865 shocked the nation.

(C) George Pullman was the only one to come up with the idea for a sleeping car.

(D) Pullman's idea for a sleeping car became workable after Lincoln's death.

42. A "heyday" in line 1 is most probably a

(A) time for harvest
(B) a period with low prices
(C) a period of great success
(D) a type of railroad schedule

45. What was the initial problem that made Pullman's cars unusable?

(A) They were too large.
(B) They were too expensive.
(C) They were too slow.
(D) They were too unusual.