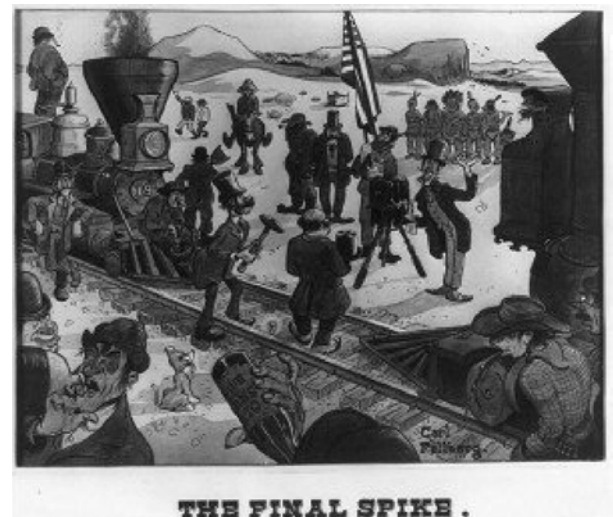




As we anticipate the school year ending and the warm days of summer, we reflect on modes of transportation, vacations and places to visit with our families in the western part of the United States (where both of the authors reside). In this month's column, we draw attention to four intriguing entries of famous and influential women across the U.S. from our book *Her Story: A Timeline of the Women Who Changed America* (on *The Denver Post* bestseller list six times so far in 2011!): the Harvey Girls, who were associated with the Santa Fe Railroad, architect Mary Colter who was also associated with the Santa Fe Railroad and her influence on the National Park Service, architect Julia Morgan's contributions to California history, and electrical engineer Mabel MacFerran Rockwell's contributions to the Hoover Dam. Come with us on our journey!

An event of great significance in American transportation history occurred at Promontory Summit, Utah on May 10, 1869 – the transcontinental railroad was completed. The tracks of the Union Pacific Railroad and the Central Pacific Railroad were joined on that momentous day. This occurrence has been called the greatest historical transportation event ever on this continent. It is certain that the completion of the railroad changed both the economy and the mobility of the American



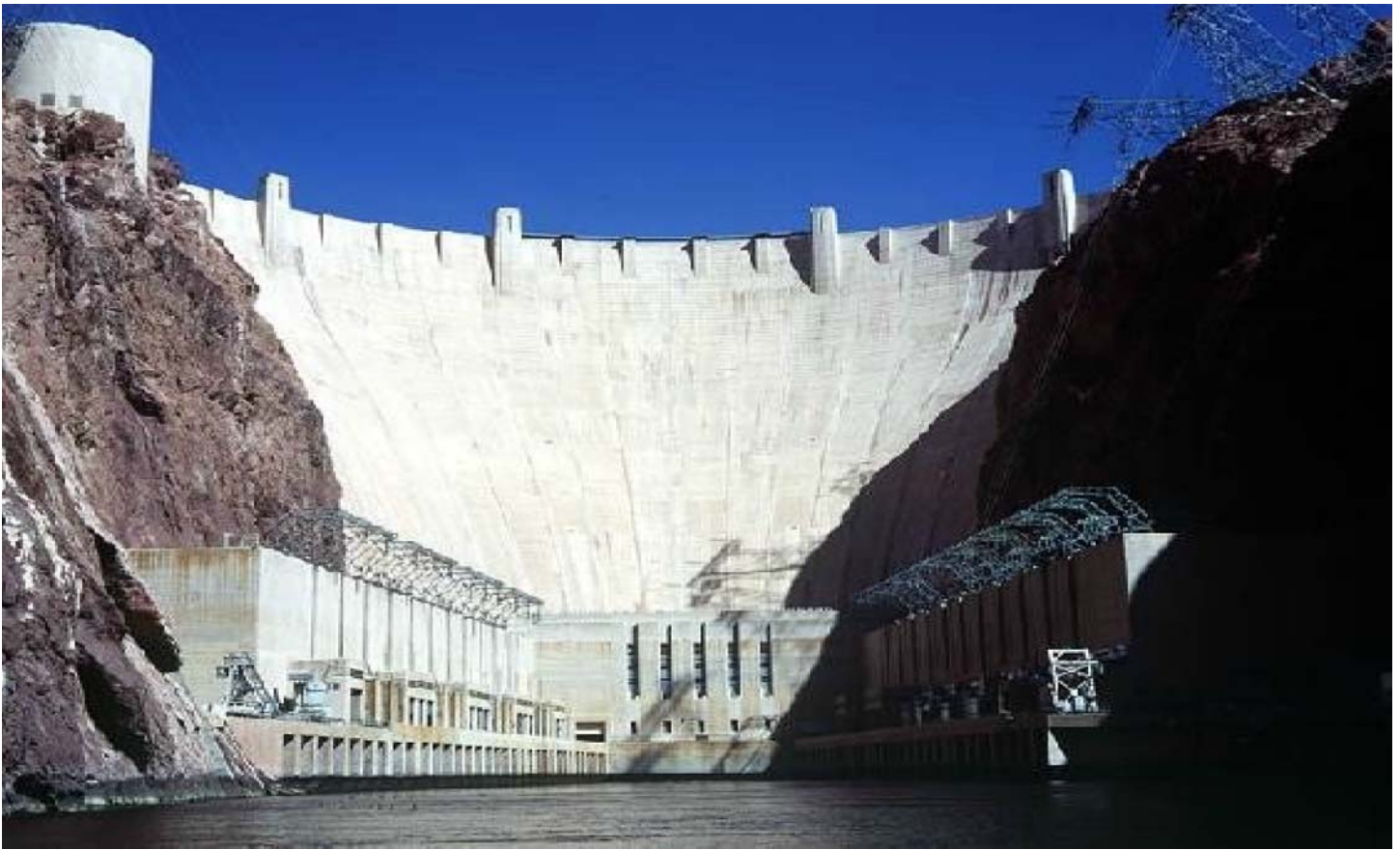
public. Before the transcontinental railroad, it had taken pioneers four to six months to transverse the distance from the Missouri River to the West Coast; with its completion, the trip was reduced to six days.

The early trains did not include a dining car. While some passengers brought their own food with them, most people ate at roadhouses that were located near the railroad's water stops. The food, the service and the behavior of the clientele all needed improvement. Fred Harvey, an employee of the Burlington Northern railroad, believed offering good food at the roadhouses was a solid business venture. He was able to put this business plan into action when he became employed by the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway. As a result of this project, Harvey is credited with operating the first restaurant chain in the U.S. One of his innovations is quite memorable. He brought in women to work as waitresses in those restaurants, to improve the behavior of the patrons. By the late 1880s, there was a Fred Harvey dining facility every 100 miles along the Santa Fe line.



In 1883, the first “**Harvey Girls**” began to work as waitresses in Fred Harvey’s restaurants. The advertisements for these Harvey Girls stated: . . . “young women, 18 to 30 years of age, of good character, attractive and intelligent”. The women were required to commit to a minimum contract for work, wear a uniform, adhere to a curfew and during their time of employment as a Harvey Girl, they could not marry. Just imagine the controversy that an ad like that would generate today!

Fred Harvey also hired architect **Mary Colter**. He asked her to serve as the chief architect and design hotels and restaurants along the Santa Fe Railway route with the objective of bringing tourists to the southwestern United States. In 1905, Colter designed the Hopi House on the south rim of the Grand Canyon. Her design of the Bright Angel Lodge, also on the south rim of the Grand Canyon, in 1935 led to an architectural genre referred to as “National Park Service Rustic.” This genre uses materials native to the site location; it also focuses on large-scale design elements. Colter designed hotels, train stations, shops, restaurants, and other tourist enticements. She used Native American and Hispanic history and art as well as the southwestern landscape promoted by her employer; this really put the American Southwest on the map! In many instances the local Hopi, Zuni, Navajo, and Mexican motifs she utilized were introduced to the American travelling public for the first time.



Mary Colter was one of the first successful women architects. Another well-known woman architect at around that same time was [Julia Morgan](#), who began her education and career as a civil engineer. In 1898, Morgan became the first woman to study architecture at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris after being refused admission for two years, due to her gender. Her architectural practice in San Francisco, established in 1904, was especially busy after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. Her many projects for the YWCA included the Asilomar Conference Center in Pacific Grove, California. After accepting more than 450 commissions, she was quite famous and was selected by William Randolph Hearst to serve as the architect for his ranch at San Simeon, California. His simple instructions to her in 1919 were: “Miss Morgan, we are tired of camping out in the open at the ranch in San Simeon and I would like to build a little something”. By 1947, Morgan had created an estate of 165 rooms in numerous buildings; there were also 127 acres of gardens, terraces, pools and walkways. Today, the project on which she worked for twenty years is called the Hearst Castle and is a California state park.

Another western tourist attraction is the Hoover Dam, drawing over a million visitors per year. In 1935, electrical engineer [Mabel MacFerran Rockwell](#) was the only woman actively involved in designing and installing the power-generating machinery at the Hoover Dam. At the time of its construction, the Hoover Dam was the world's largest dam and an engineering marvel. It straddles the Colorado River which forms the border between the states of Nevada and Arizona. At over 700 feet in height, the dam was constructed using over four million cubic yards of concrete.

We are passionate about sharing information about women's contributions to all facets of our life. As you embark on your summer vacation and travel, take time to learn about how historical women made your journey possible and more enjoyable!



Charlotte S. Waisman, PhD, is a national champion and advocate for women as a professor and keynote speaker. As an executive coach, Waisman coauthored 50 Activities for Developing Leaders and The Leadership Training Activity Book. She is a principal with a consulting company specializing in leadership and workforce excellence initiatives.

Jill S. Tietjen, PE, is an author, speaker and an electrical engineer. Her books include the Setting the Record Straight series. Tietjen is a top historian on scientific and technical women. She is President/CEO of Technically Speaking, a consulting company that specializes in improving career opportunities for women in technology. Write to us at jill@herstoryatimeline.com and charlotte@herstoryatimeline.com and tell us your stories.

Sign up for our ENewsletter at www.herstoryatimeline.com