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Role of railroads in establishing standard time

A standardized time system was initially used by British railroads on December 11, 1847, when they switched from local mean time (using the local meridian) to Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). It was also given the name, "Railway Time," due to the important role the rail companies played in establishing it. The majority of public clocks in Great Britain were synchronized using GMT by 1855.

Throughout most of the 19th century, local mean time was used throughout North America, resulting in numerous local times. These inordinate local times created inconsistency and confusion for regional and national railroad schedules. On October 11, 1883, the heads of the major railroads in North America met in Chicago to adopt the Standard Time System. The new system was adopted by most states almost immediately thereafter.

Source: *Wikipedia*