What about Your Neighborhood?

Are there trains that run near or through your community?
Are there abandoned tracks that indicate that trains once traveled there?
When did the train service begin? How can you find that out?
What company created the first railroad in your community?
Who was in the labor force that built the railroad?
What kinds of products were transported by rail in your community? Agricultural or industrial or both?
Where did these products go?
Were the rails constructed to move travelers as well as products?
Were the rails constructed to move commuters?
If trains still run today, what are they carrying? Containers? Flatcars? Commuter cars? How do you know?

Conduct oral histories.
Did someone in your community once work in agriculture or transporting food products in your state?
Learn more about his or her work and how foods moved in your community. Find out about the role of transportation in their work.

Resources

(http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/gmdhtml/gmdhome.html)
Maps from different time periods from all over the United States. Click on “Transportation and Communication,” “Railroad Maps Collection,” and then “Browse by Geographic Location” to find railway maps of your community in the past.

Train Resources (http://www.trains.com)
Extensive information, including listings of railroad resources all over the United States. For information on railroads in your community, look under “Resources” on the left-hand side. Click “Tourist Railroads/Museums” and then your state to find attractions in your area. Clicking on “Historical Societies” leads to an alphabetical state listing of nationwide railroad historical societies. These links will provide railroad information specific to your area. Contact organizations by phone for more information.

Agriculture in the Classroom (http://www.agclassroom.org/)
Select “State Web Sites” from the “State Programs” menu and choose your state. Contact your local program for more information on agricultural history and the role of transportation. For a brief overview of agriculture in your state, click on “State Agricultural Profiles” and choose your state.

Museum of Chinese in the Americas (http://www.moca-nyc.org/)
Click on “Resources” or use the message boards to find out about the experiences of Chinese Americans in your community. Educational resource packets are available for teachers.