Taking the Train—Travel Math

Train travel was one of the most widely used modes of transportation for migrants traveling from the South to the North. Migrants might have used a train map to plan their trip. Using the map, distance table, and key provided to you, solve the following problems.

1. Using the key, track the route of a migrant from New Orleans to Chicago. Did transportation between these cities require that passengers use more than one railway line?

Track the route from Macon, Georgia, to New York City. Did this trip require the use of more than one railway line?

Which trip would have taken longer or covered more miles, and by how much? (Show your work.)

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Jacob Lawrence, The Migration Series, Panel No. 5, 1940–41.

Primary Source 32. Key to railroad lines, detail of Rand McNally Railroad Map.
2. How many cities are listed on the distance table? How many cities on the table were in the South? How many were in the North?

3. Calculate the total number of miles you must travel to complete the following trip: You leave Jacksonville, Florida, and travel to Mobile, Alabama, where you meet your grandparents. From there, you travel to Birmingham, Alabama, to spend 2 nights. When you leave Birmingham, you travel all the way to Chicago, Illinois, where you complete your trip. How many miles total have you traveled? (Show your work.)