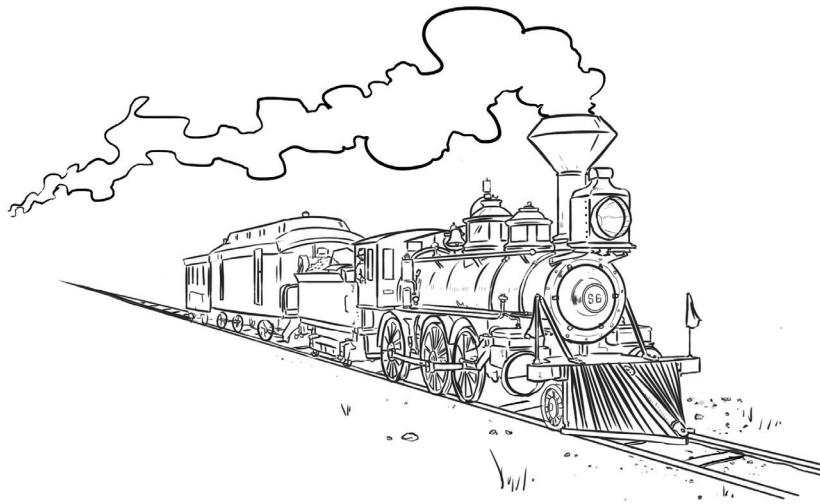


Adventures on the American Frontier

Men on Iron Horses

Part One

Peter Cooper's Horse and a Half



A Royal Fireworks Production

Royal Fireworks Press
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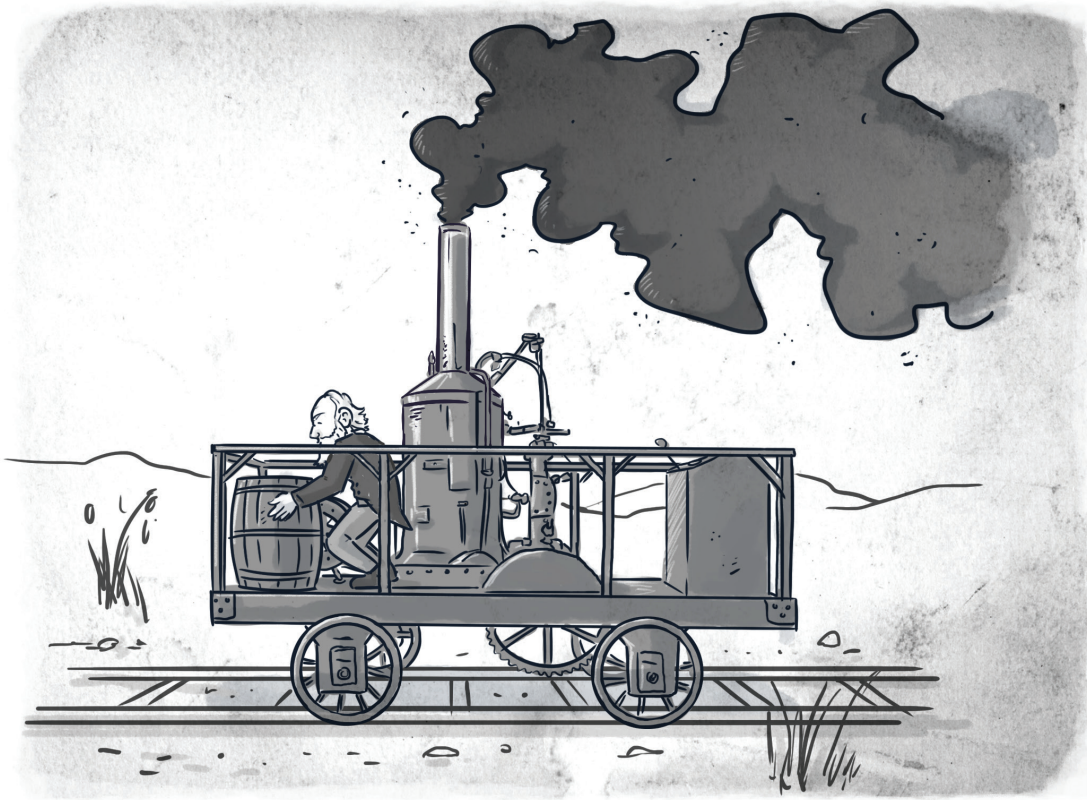
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“Mr. Cooper, you need a horse!”

The call came to Mr. Cooper from the open window of a horse-drawn railroad car. The driver of the horsecar had pulled his horse to a stop next to Mr. Cooper’s strange-looking train.

The people in the horsecar were surprised at what they saw. Where a horse should be, there was an open platform on wheels. On the platform, with Mr. Cooper, was a strange machine.





Peter Cooper, dressed as a gentleman in that year of 1830, was too busy to answer. He was dipping water from a barrel into a round boiler that stood on end over a firebox. He checked the workings of the little locomotive that he had built himself.



It had iron connecting arms, pipes that had once been gun barrels, a long leather belt, and other odds and ends, which all worked together to make the small locomotive's wheels turn.

Peter put another shovelful of coal into the firebox. The calls that came from the horsecar didn't bother him at all. Until then, people in the United States had ridden in something that was pulled by an animal. They would have to be shown what a clanking steam machine could do.

Peter stood up and wiped the dirt from his hands on an old piece of cloth. He had been getting the *Tom Thumb*, which is what he had named his little one-and-a-half-horsepower locomotive, ready for the thirteen-mile trip back to Baltimore, Maryland.

Peter's locomotive had just proved, to the men in the open car behind it, that a steam locomotive could be used on the tracks where the horsecar ran from Baltimore to Ellicott's Mills. If a little



engine like his could do the work, then surely people could see how much better a larger locomotive would be. He put down the cloth, brushed a bit of coal from his coat sleeve, and looked toward the laughing men in the horse-drawn car.

“Good afternoon, gentlemen,” he said. He took off his tall hat and bowed. “I have an iron horse here—a horse and a half, you might say—ready to take my friends back to Baltimore. We’re going to match your speed or better it.”