



Perfecting the American Steam Locomotive (Railroads Past and Present)

J. Parker Lamb

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Perfecting the American Steam Locomotive documents the role played by mechanical engineers in the development of locomotive design. The steam engine and the mechanical engineering profession both grew directly out of the Industrial Revolution's need for sources of power beyond that of men and animals. Invented in England when coal mining was being developed, the practical steam engine eventually found numerous applications in transportation, especially in railroad technology. J. Parker Lamb traces the evolution of the steam engine from the early 1700s through the early 1800s, when the first locomotives were sent to the United States from England. Lamb then shifts the scene to the development of the American steam locomotive, first by numerous small builders, and later, by the early 20th century, by only three major enterprises and a handful of railroad company shops. Lamb reviews the steady progress of steam locomotive technology through its pinnacle during the 1930s, then discusses the reasons for its subsequent decline.

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