



ELIJAH MCCOY

Born: May 2nd 1844

Died: October 10th 1929

At the age of 86

The Real McCoy By Wendy Towle and
Wikipedia

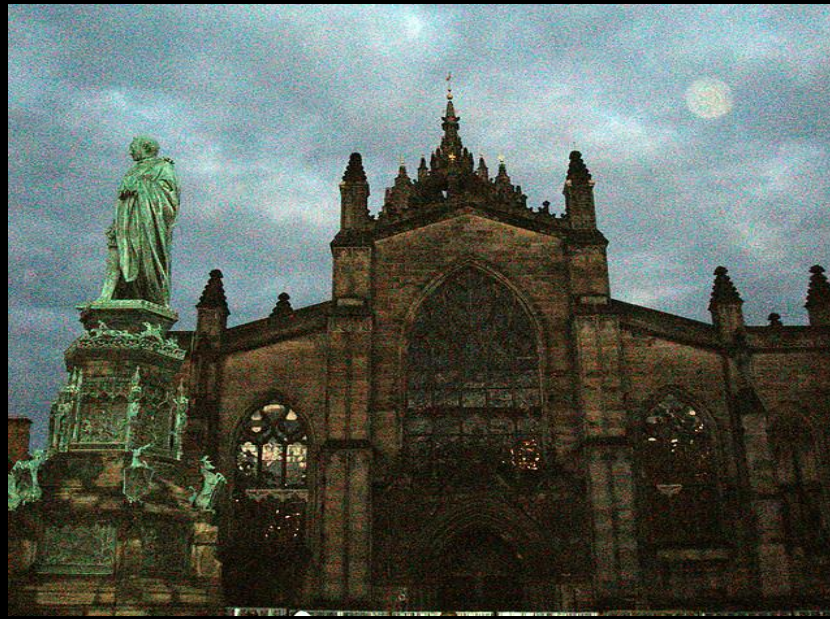
- Born in Colchester Ontario to the parents George and Amellia, McCoy
- Former slaves escaped from Kentucky Via the underground railroad
- Elijah was the only one of his original family to be born in Canada where he lived

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- Elijah's parents thought he had a talent for working with tools and machines
- They sent Elijah to a school Where he could study mechanics and design his own inventions
 - The school was in Edinburgh Scotland
 - Elijah travelled 3 000 miles to get to his school

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- When Elijah was studying, the civil war started

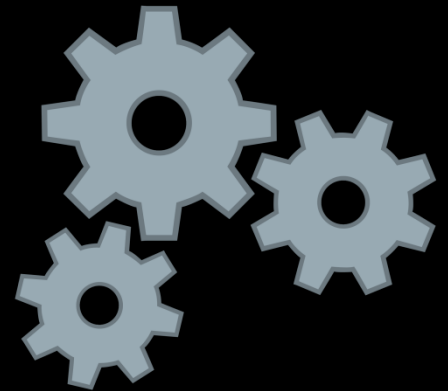
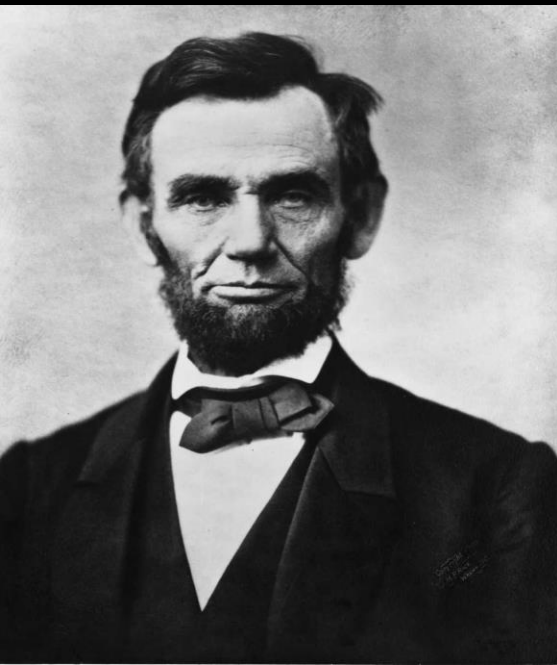
- President Abraham Lincoln issued the emancipation the proclamation during the Civil world war in America

When the civil ended Elijah could live anywhere in the U.S.A as a free man

- He finished his training in Scotland as a “Master Mechanic and engineer”

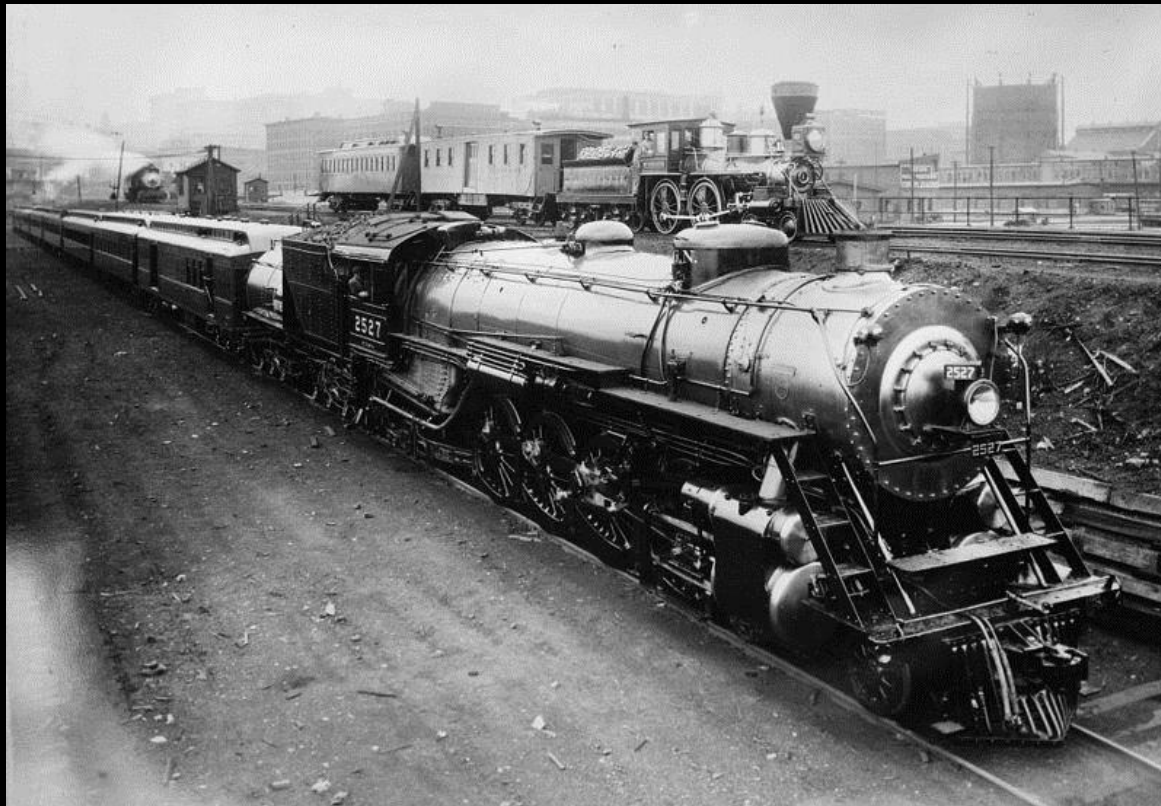
- Elijah settled in Ypsilanti, Michigan but had a hard time finding work

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- Many people still thought of “blacks” as slaves
- The only job Elijah could find was as a fireman/oilman for the Michigan central railroad

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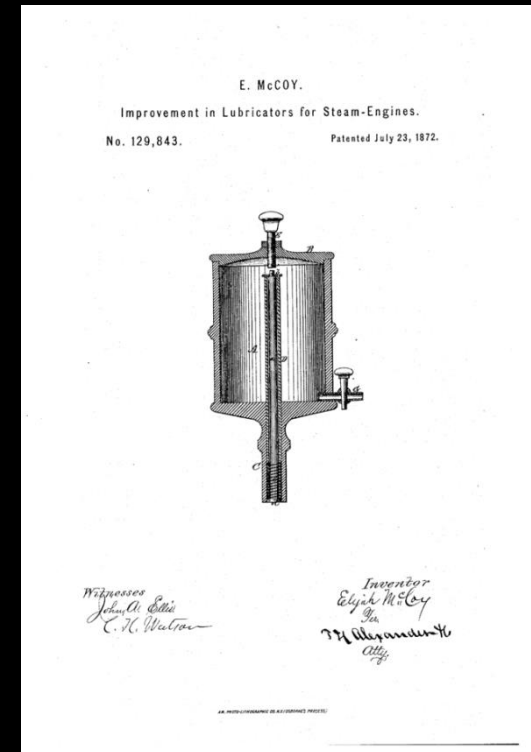
- The Fireman shovelled coal onto fires burning inside the firebox at the back of the cab
- Every hour he shovelled two tons of coal into the firebox
 - Elijah's job was a very dangerous and difficult
 - Elijah was also the oilman for the train
- Elijah would walk the length of the train oiling the axles, bearings, and other moving parts of each car
- When Elijah finished lubricating the train parts, he raced back to the firebox in the cab to see the engine's needs

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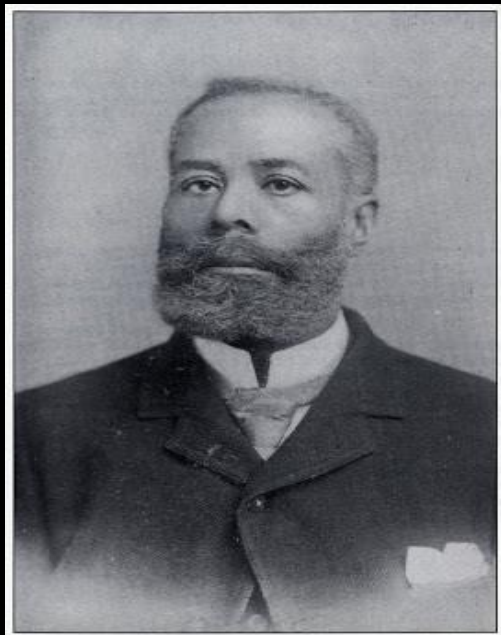


- Elijah felt he could improve on those inventions
- He worked for two years on his idea finally he perfected a design of a lubricating cup that would automatically drip oil where it was needed
 - Elijah made his first oil cup model in 1872
- He applied a patent from the government to protect his rights to his invention

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- Many engineers were not interested with the inventions of a black man
 - The railroad owners at Michigan Central recognized that his invention was superior to other models
 - News of the successful invention soon spread
 - Soon all the railroads wanted Elijah's oil cup for their trains
- They always asked for "The Real McCoy" because copied his invention



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- Elijah wanted to spend more time working on other inventions
- He wanted his own machine shop so he sold part of his patent to another investor
- He only got a fraction of its worth but the money let him continue making mechanical devices
- In years to come Elijah would sell more patents to fund his other inventions

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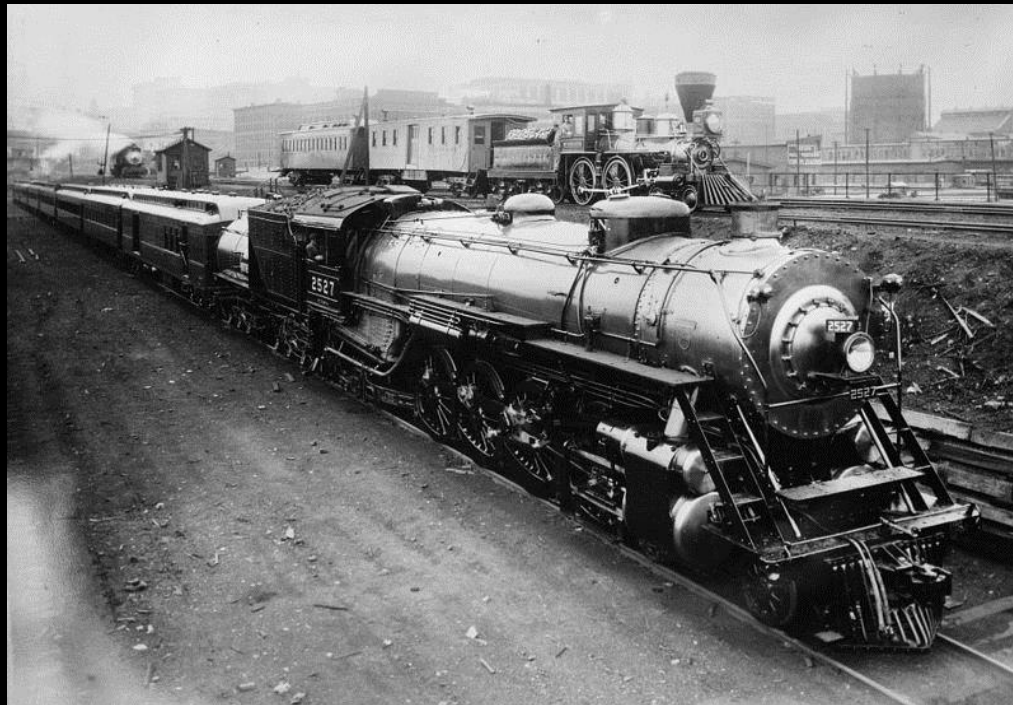
- Elijah was also starting a family
- Elijah married Ann Elizabeth Stewart in 1868
 - She died four years later at the age of 25
- Elijah remarried in 1873 to Mary Eleanora Delaney
 - Like Elijah she was a child of runaway slaves

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- By 1882 Elijah was ready to leave the Michigan Central Railroad, he wanted to work full time on his own invention
- The McCoy's left Ypsilanti and settled in Detroit, Michigan
- Elijah served as a mechanical consultant for several firms

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- Elijah was dedicated tom his work but also made time for children
- Elijah’s wife, Mary was involved in community affairs

Mary McCoy was the only “black” charter member of the exclusive Twentieth century club where the “best” woman in Detroit belonged



- Elijah also made new inventions such as: the ironing board, the sprinkler, or a better rubber shoe heel
- Elijah was so prolific that he sometimes patented two or three inventions a year
- In 1916 Elijah invented the Graphite lubricator, which he was most proud of this was designed to lubricate the new super heaters on trains
- In 1920 Elijah established his own company- The Elijah McCoy Manufacturing Company- to sell his graphite lubricators



- Elijah and Mary were in a traffic accident and Mary died from her injuries in 1923

- Elijah's health worsened

- In 1929 Elijah passed away in Detroit, Michigan

- In 1975 Detroit celebrated the first Elijah McCoy day by naming a street Elijah McCoy Drive

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