

Antebellum steamboats

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The steamboat craze happened during the turnpike craze. It was started by an engineer named Robert Fulton who installed a steam engine in a vessel that became known as the Clermont but was nicknamed Fulton's Folly. One day in 1807, the little ship churned steadily from New York City up the Hudson River toward Albany which was 150 miles in 32 hours. The success was amazing. People could now defy wind, waves, tides, and downstream currents. Carrying capacity doubled.

Keelboats went up the Mississippi at about 1 mph which was very expensive. The steamboats traveled over 10 mph against the current. By 1820 there were 60 steamboats on the Mississippi. By 1860 there were over 1000. Rivalries developed and led to racing. The steamboats led to an opening of the West and South which were filled with rivers. Until 1830 the products of the western region went southward and very little finished products made their way back west.

The steamboat helped to send the finished products upriver and helped bind West and South together. This binding inspired the transportation revolution. In 1787, John Fitch built the first recorded steam powered boat in the United States. It was propelled by a row of oars on each side of the boat. He experimented with side-mounted paddle wheels, but in 1790 he used stern mounted oars instead. Fitch was the first to operate a steamboat commercially. It had scheduled transport of passengers and freight on the Delaware River in 1790.

The first successful use of steam power to navigate a paddle wheel boat in America was in 1793. Samuel Morey used his steamboat on the Connecticut River. Robert Fulton became interested in steamboats at the age of 12 when <https://assignbuster.com/antebellum-steamboats/>

he visited William Henry in 1777. He built and tested an experimental steamboat on the Seine River in 1803. Before returning to the United States, Fulton ordered a steam engine from Boulton and Watt, and built what the North River Steamboat. In 1807, the ship began passenger service between New York City and Albany.