

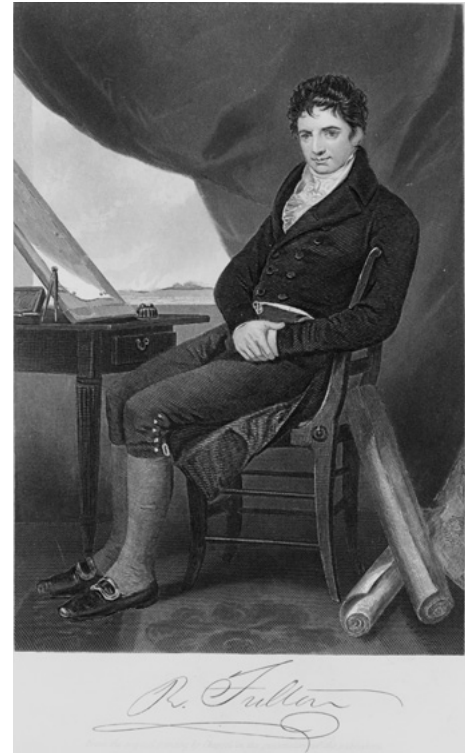
Biography Activity

Industrialization and Nationalism

Robert Fulton (1765–1815)

Robert Fulton was an American inventor and engineer. He is best known for establishing the first successful line of steam-powered ships. He focused his efforts on inland waterways and shipbuilding, including designs for canals and prototypes for submarines. In 1801 Fulton was commissioned to build a steamboat in America with an English steam engine. In August 1807, his steam-powered boat, the *Clermont*, made the trip up the Hudson River from New York to Albany in 32 hours, cutting the usual sailing time in half. A number of others had built steamboats before Fulton, but his was the first to be commercially successful in America. During the next eight years, Fulton established and managed steamboat lines, and in 1814 he was commissioned by the federal government to build its first steam warship.

More About the Image: This engraving, published in 1881, was created from an original painting by Alonzo Chappel.



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- 1. Drawing Conclusions** Why were Fulton’s steamboats more successful than other steamboats?

- 2. Making Connections** Why might this improvement to steamboat design help transform transportation?
