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for his own country. Fitch refused his offers of financial aid, preferring to keep his invention for the improvement of America's commerce.

The inventor returned to his workshop, determined to improve on his first attempt. On August 22, 1787, with all members of the Convention except General Washington present, John Fitch's second steamboat, its engine chugging steadily, moved sedately up the Delaware River against the tide, its paddles swinging rhythmically on either side. Despite the success of the demonstration, people could not see that steam would ever operate a boat as quickly or cheaply as sails or oars. Moreover, they looked askance at the snorting little demon that furnished the uncanny power, and expected the whole contraption to blow up.

There were, however, a number of people, inspired by Fitch's enthusiasm, willing to finance further experiments in overcoming defects in the engine. Once more the inventor and his mechanic went to work. By July 1788 they were ready to launch another boat on the Delaware. The new model had a row of paddles, shaped somewhat like snow shovels, at the stern. The whole countryside turned out for the exhibition. Both shores of the river were lined with cheering spectators as the little craft plowed against the current up to Bordentown, making 8 miles an hour.

Just before reaching the dock the boiler sprung a leak so that the engine would not work. They had to cast anchor and wait for the next tide to float them ashore. Nevertheless, John Fitch's boat had done what had never been done in the world before. It had been impelled for twenty miles by steam against the tide. This little accident was of the sort that turns enthusiasts into scoffers. But to a man like John Fitch, who had faith in his ideas and determination to succeed, it acted only as an incentive.

Fitch and Voigt returned to their workshop and by October had completely redeemed themselves. Two successful trips with boatloads of passengers were made to Burlington in 190 minutes.

Fitch's crowning achievement was his commercial steamboat of 1790. All that summer the boat carried passengers and freight to and from various points along the Delaware and Schuylkill. It was operated on a schedule, just as are the steamboats of today. But it was not a financial success. The public did not patronize it, for they saw no practical use for steamboats. Time meant very little in those easy-going days and it was hard to convince them that coal and wood would ever be cheaper than wind.