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**Fulton's Folly – Part II**

**Lead: On August 17, 1807, Robert Fulton, in a thirty-two-hour experimental excursion, ushered in of a new era of transportation. Steam power took to water.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: Fulton, artist, inventor and engineer, directed the construction of a steamboat he had conceived while previously living in Paris, working there on canal and submarine designs. It was in the French capital that Fulton met the American minister to Napoleon's**

**government, Robert Livingston a wealthy and aristocratic New York businessman. Livingston contracted with Fulton to design a commercial steamboat for use on the Hudson River. Although his was not the first steamboat, Fulton demonstrated conclusively this means of propulsion was a much needed and practical form of transportation.**

**Fulton's steamboat, *Clermont* derided as "Fulton's Folly", during construction, was a flat-bottomed, square sterned vessel, one hundred fifty feet long, sixteen feet wide with paddlewheels, fifteen feet in diameter, installed midway along the sides. Although Fulton did not intend to use them, for emergency purposes and to**

**assure the passengers, the boat was equipped with sails.**

**Heading north to Albany against the current, the steamboat appeared to observers like “a sawmill mounted on a raft and set on fire.” For twenty-four hours the boat churned its way north. The party stopped at the village of Clermont, for which the boat was named, and over-nighted at Livingston’s estate on the Hudson. During the festivities Livingston declared the experiment a triumph and announced the engagement of his young cousin to forty-one-year-old bachelor, Robert Fulton.**

**The next morning at nine, the steamboat continued up the Hudson**

**and arrived in Albany at 5:00 to a cheering crowd led by the governor of New York. *Clermont* had covered one hundred fifty miles in thirty-two hours at an average speed of 4.7 miles per hour. It was a trip that took a sailing schooner four long days. Fulton's Folly had brought a revolution in transport.**

**At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

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