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Elijah McCoy

Canada-born Elijah McCoy (1843-1929) automated steam engine maintenance, previously done by hand, by patenting an automatic lubricator in 1872. By 1926 he had patented more than forty lubricating devices used internationally on trains and boats and in factories. Trained as a mechanical engineer in Scotland, this son of former slaves faced racial discrimination in the U.S. and made his living as a fireman stoking fires and oiling engines for the Michigan Central Railroad. McCoy sought to end the delays caused by frequent oil stops. In his Ypsilanti workshop he developed a lubricating cup that continuously fed oil to steam engines. The inventor's other patents included a folding ironing table. Assurances of authenticity of McCoy lubricating cups are believed to have been the origin of the phrase "the real McCoy."

Significant Date:

Civil War and After (1860-1875)

Registry Year: 1994 **Erected Date:** 1994

Marker Location

Address: 229 W. Michigan

City: Ypsilanti

State: MI **ZipCode:**

County: Washtenaw

Township: Ypsilanti

Lat: 42.24096500 / **Long:** -83.61486700

Web URL:

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