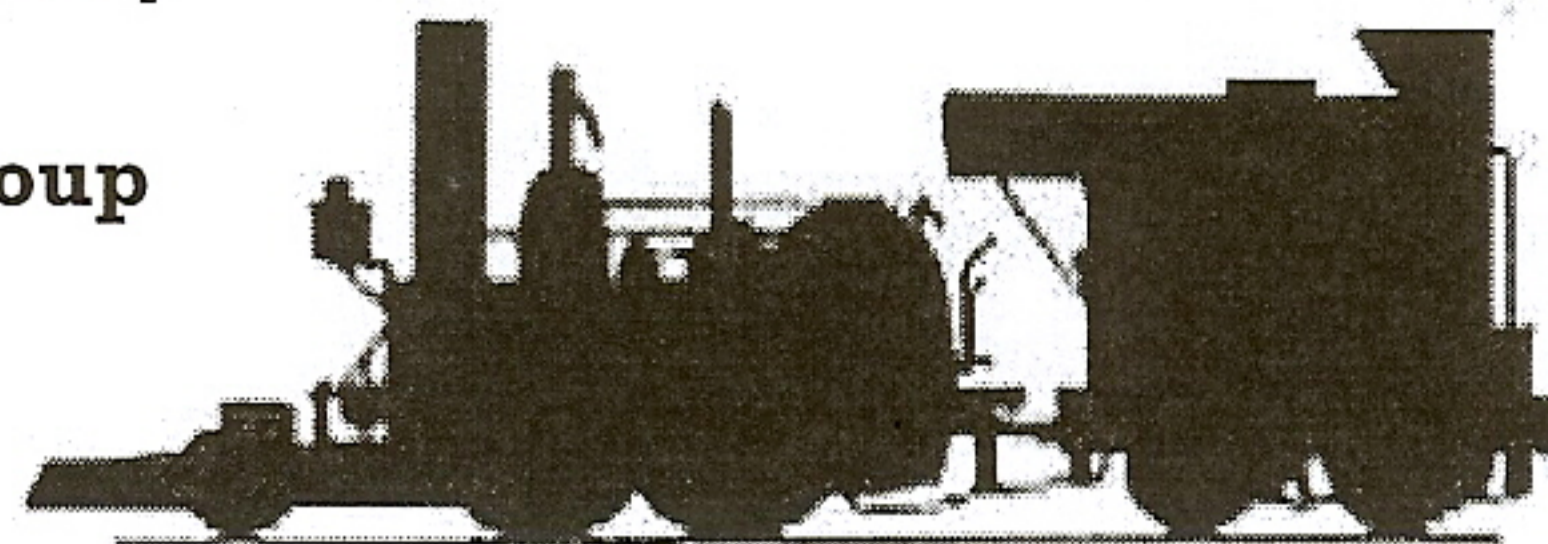
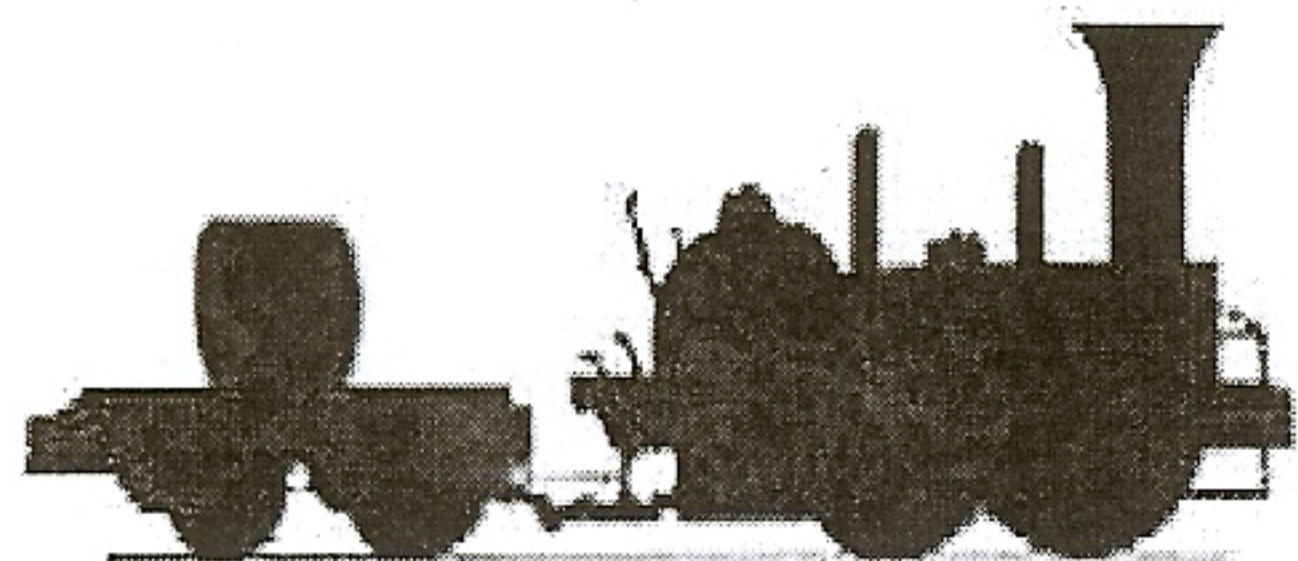


The  
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THE **John Bull** ETIN

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## Bordentown and the C&A

### Started With the C&A

### BORDENTOWN: A Station Stop Thru Five Railroad Corporations

By John Kilbride

It can only be imagined what was on the mind of young Issac Dripps when he was confronted with the cargo that arrived from England at a Bordentown wharf in early September 1831. The vessel's paperwork listed "one locomotive steam engine as follows: one engine body, boiler and shipped on deck: two pair large wheels and axles, three boxes (under deck) and one iron box, being marked and numbered .....paying 19 pounds Sterling." (about \$95.00 at the time.) A product of the Robert Stephenson and Company (Newcastle), the items had been purchased by his boss (and Bordentown resident) Robert Stevens during a trip to England some ten months earlier. Dripps, a mechanic who had worked for the Stevens family for a year, "was an experienced steamboat mechanic, with a fine knowledge of practical steam engineering" according to the John White book The John Bull: 150 Years A Locomotive. Alas, nowhere in the shipment's contents were assembly instructions!

Over the next ten days, Dripps and his crew put the pieces together, assembling a 10-ton steam engine. They filled the boiler with water and lit a fire. When 30 pounds of steam were raised, the throttle was opened and to their delight, the engine moved forward along a short test track. Stevens, delighted with the results, decided to pay back some political debt with a festive November showing of his new property and plans, and many trips were made back and forth. Afterward, the engine, now known as the "John Bull", was

stored to await completion of his railway, some 18 months later. (*Until then, progressive service was protected with horse-drawn carriages on completed portions of the Camden & Amboy line.*)



*Historical Collections of New Jersey, 1844*

*View of the "Tunnel" looking east toward South Amboy. A wooden staircase carried passengers down to the covered platform to await their train. A bell, mounted at street level above the tracks, alerted passengers of the arrival of their train.*

### Bordentown: Early Regional Commerce Center

Bordentown was first settled by Thomas Farnsworth in 1682 when he moved his family up river from Burlington and into a home on the bluff overlooking the broad bend in the Delaware River. "Farnsworth Landing" soon became the center of trade for the region. In 1717, Joseph Borden arrived and by 1740 had founded a transportation system to carry people and freight between New York City and Philadelphia, using the river locale that provided the shortest overland route to