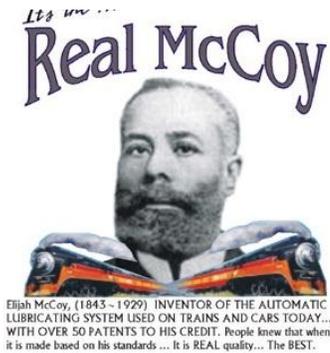


## Elijah McCoy – Biography



The inventor was born in 1843, in Colchester, Ontario, Canada. His parents were former slaves, George and Mildred McCoy (nee Goins) had fled Kentucky for Canada on the underground railroad.

George McCoy enlisted in the British forces, in return, he was awarded 160 acres of land for his service. When Elijah was three, his family moved back to the U.S., settling in Detroit, Michigan. He had eleven brothers and sisters.

In 1868, Elijah McCoy married Ann Elizabeth Stewart who died four years later. A year later, McCoy married his second wife Mary Eleanora Delaney. The couple had no children.

At the age of fifteen, Elijah McCoy served a mechanical engineering apprenticeship in Edinburgh, Scotland. Afterwards, he returned to Michigan to pursue a position in his field. However, the only job he found was that of a locomotive fireman and oiler for the Michigan Central Railroad. The fireman on a train was responsible for fueling the steam engine and the oiler lubricated the engine's moving parts as well as the train's axles and bearings. Because of his training, he was able to identify and solve the problems of engine lubrication and overheating. At that time, trains needed to periodically stop and be lubricated, to prevent overheating. Elijah McCoy developed a lubricator for steam engines that did not require the train to stop. His lubricator used steam pressure to pump oil wherever it was needed.

### Elijah McCoy - Patents for Lubricators

Elijah McCoy was issued his first patent - [US patent #129,843](#) - on July 12th, 1872 for his improvement in lubricators for steam engines. McCoy continued to improve upon his design and invented several more improvements. Railroad and shipping lines began using McCoy's new lubricators and the Michigan Central Railroad promoted him to an instructor in the use of his new inventions. Later, Elijah McCoy became a consultant to the railroad industry on patent matters.

### Final Years

In 1920, McCoy opened his own company, the Elijah McCoy Manufacturing Company. Unfortunately, Elijah McCoy suffered in his later years, enduring a financial, mental, and physical breakdown. McCoy died on October 10, 1929 from senile dementia caused by hypertension after spending a year in the Eloise Infirmary in Michigan.