



CAROLWOOD FOUNDATION  
PRESERVING WALT DISNEY'S RAILROAD LEGACY



The Power of Steam Engines:  
A Legacy of Innovation and  
Inspiration

# The Walt Disney Railroad Story Documentary



# About Michael Broggie

**Michael Broggie** (born June 19, 1942) is an American author and historian who specializes in the history of Walt Disney and The Walt Disney Company—specifically Disney's connection to railroads. He is the son of Roger E. Broggie, who was selected by Walt Disney to be the first Imagineer.

Broggie was born in Los Angeles, California on June 19, 1942 and grew up between Lake Arrowhead and the San Fernando Valley. His father was Roger E. Broggie, an engineer, machinist, and head of Walt Disney Studio machine shop.

As a small child, Broggie spent many Sundays in the backyard of Walt Disney's home in the Holmby Hills neighborhood of Los Angeles. He helped Walt and his father operate the 1/8-scale Carolwood Pacific Railroad—the model railroad layout which his father helped build.[2] On June 18, 1955, about a month before the opening of Disneyland Park, 12-year-old Broggie assisted Walt Disney and his father with the steam up of the E.P. Ripley—one of the locomotives of the Disneyland Railroad. He also test-drove cars designed for the park's Autopia attraction.

Broggie earned an MBA and a doctorate in marketing (summa cum laude) at Pacific University, San Diego; a BA in communications from California State University, Northridge; and an AA in Journalism (with honors) from Los Angeles Valley College. He attended Lincoln University School of Law, San Francisco but did not graduate.

After graduating from North Hollywood High School in 1960, Broggie worked his way through college as an attractions Cast Member (ride operator) at Disneyland on the Autopia and Mine Train Through Nature's Wonderland during the summer seasons. After completing his undergraduate education, he joined the Walt Disney Studios in Burbank, California, as a publicity writer in the motion picture marketing department.

Broggie's career led to management and consulting positions with Marriott, Boise Cascade, and General Motors.[3] For three years in the early 1970s, he returned to his hometown of Lake Arrowhead and served as the executive vice president and general manager of Lake Arrowhead Development Company. Under his administration, the lake was transferred to a community corporation owned in common by area property owners. Broggie also served on the ABC sponsorship team for the 1984 Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

Broggie then focused on his connection to Disney and began researching Walt Disney's lifelong connections with trains—culminating in the publication of *Walt Disney's Railroad Story* in 1997. With his wife, Sharon, he is co-founder and chairman of The Carolwood Society and chairman emeritus of the non-profit Carolwood Foundation. The foundation operates Walt Disney's Carolwood Barn within the Los Angeles Live Steamers Railroad Museum in Griffith Park on behalf of the Walt Disney Family Foundation.

On behalf of the model railroad industry, Broggie appeared in 30 cities as the featured presenter of "Walt Disney's Railroad Story" on a national tour titled "World's Greatest Hobby."

Broggie is also a veteran of the United States Air Force, where he served in the Aerospace Medical Command as a pharmacy specialist.

Broggie is the author or co-author of eight books—both Disney and non-Disney in subject matter. *Walt Disney's Railroad Story* was awarded in 1998 with the Benjamin Franklin Gold Medal for Best Biography from the Publishers Marketing Association (PMA).[

In addition to his books, Broggie has authored and edited numerous articles for regional and national publications, and is currently doing research for his autobiography. Broggie is also the author of the official souvenir guide to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley, California.

Broggie is married to Sharon Charmagne Broggie and resides Prescott Lakes, Arizona. He has two sons from a previous relationship and one stepson.

Broggie and his wife support a variety of charitable and non-profit causes in Arizona. Broggie is a member of the Westlake Yacht Club, he was founder and initial CEO of The Nautical Foundation, a non-profit corporation that raises funds to promote the values and opportunities of youth and competitive sailing. He is also co-founder and president of the Prescott Police Foundation.[3] He and Sharon served eight years as volunteers in the Prescott Police Department's unit of Citizens on Patrol (COP). He was appointed to three terms on the appeals board of the Prescott Fire Department, the last term as chairman ended in 2020.

Broggie is an advocate for motion picture and television production in the state of Arizona, which was a successful industry for many decades until the state eliminated certain tax incentives and other financial benefits. Dating back to the silent era, over 130 motion pictures and countless television productions and commercials have been made in Arizona due to its climate and variety of scenic locales.

In 2010, Broggie was awarded an honorary diploma by Rim of the World High School, where his family sponsors an annual music scholarship award to a graduating student in memory of his mother, who was a concert violinist.

## As author

- Walt Disney's Railroad Story**
- Walt Disney's Happy Place**
- Walt Disney's Words of Wisdom**
- The History of Irwindale: Jardin de Roca (Garden of Rocks)**

## As co-author

- Air Force One: The Final Mission**

## As contributor

- Poor Charlie's Almanack: The Wit and Wisdom of Charles T. Munger**



# Foreword

*Nothing happens unless first a dream.*

—Carl Sandburg

WASHINGTON MONUMENT BY NIGHT

My husband, Walt Disney, had many projects and interests that competed for his attention but none could supplant that special place in his heart reserved for trains. From his early childhood until the last years we shared together enjoying our grandchildren, Walt often set aside some of his private time to be with his beloved trains, either at our home or at Disneyland. They provided him with a peaceful source of pleasure and valuable relief from the demands of business and fame. Whenever he was around railroads, and in the company of his fellow railfans, he enjoyed being “just one of the boys.”

During the time we lived in the Los Feliz area of Los Angeles, our home was only a few miles from the Southern Pacific station in Glendale. Walt got a singular pleasure by stepping on a railroad track to feel the vibration of an approaching or departing train. He always urged me to join him: “Just put your foot on the rail, Lilly,” he would say. “You can *feel* the train.” It was something he did as a small boy in Marceline, Missouri, and continued to do throughout his life whenever he was within walking distance of a rail line. (Of course, this was also dangerous, and every child should be taught to stay off railroad tracks.)

When we were building our home on Carolwood Drive in Holmby Hills, Walt informed me that he planned to build a miniature railroad which would run completely around the property. I made it clear that I wasn't thrilled because his train was going to run through the middle of an area where I had planned to grow a beautiful flower garden. However, Walt and I had our way of compromising and we settled the issue by digging a tunnel so the track ran under my garden.

As it turned out, the tunnel solution produced one of the most exciting experiences for passengers riding on the Carolwood Pacific Railroad. Passengers entered a totally dark cavern where they couldn't see any light at all until they were beyond the tunnel's midpoint curve.

It was really exciting, especially the first time for little riders. Walt believed kids enjoyed a little scare, but he taught that it should be accompanied by a “wink” so children wouldn't lose their trust. This delicate point was illustrated in many of his films.

Just to make everything official for his miniature railroad, Walt had a right-of-way agreement written by an attorney who worked at the studio. Walt and I signed it, and our daughters, Diane and Sharon, served as witnesses. Most likely, it is the only railroad right-of-way agreement ever signed between two people who were married to each other!

With the help of Roger Broggie and the talented members of his staff, Walt finally achieved his dream of owning a real steam railroad, even though it was only 1/8th of full size. He was very proud of it, and it pleased me that he named his locomotive *Lilly Belle* in my honor.

The Carolwood Pacific Railroad operated for three years before Walt began applying his energy and imagination to create a much larger project. I remember the many times he came in for dinner after running his train around our property and he would be filled with exciting thoughts about a magical place. He would describe informative exhibits, entertaining shows, and thrilling rides that families could enjoy together. His plans always included an old-fashioned steam train running around the site. Initially, he envisioned building a small theme park next to the studio on some vacant land, with the possibility of linking the railroad track with the one that ran in Griffith Park. As was the case with many of his ideas, this one grew as he shared it with his wonderfully talented staff, who worked closely with him for so many years.

One important quality that Walt had more than any other person I've ever known was confidence. Once he convinced himself that a concept was sound, or a risk was worth taking, he was willing to commit all of his energy and resources to see it through to completion. Sometimes he failed, but he never gave up.

Throughout our many years together, he frequently asked me for my opinion on important decisions. He respected the fact that I shared his risks. Our daughters, Diane and Sharon, and I provided the quiet, personal life he needed to balance the public image his career demanded. I treasure the memories of our life together, which was exciting, happy, and fulfilling.

I'm very pleased that the private episodes of Walt's life, and our time together, as told through Michael Broggie's railroad stories, will provide you with a uniquely personal impression of my husband: who he was, how he worked, and the way we lived. I believe that the more factual details you learn about the private side of Walt, the more you may understand why he will always have the admiration of his colleagues, the affection of his fans throughout the world, and my love and respect.



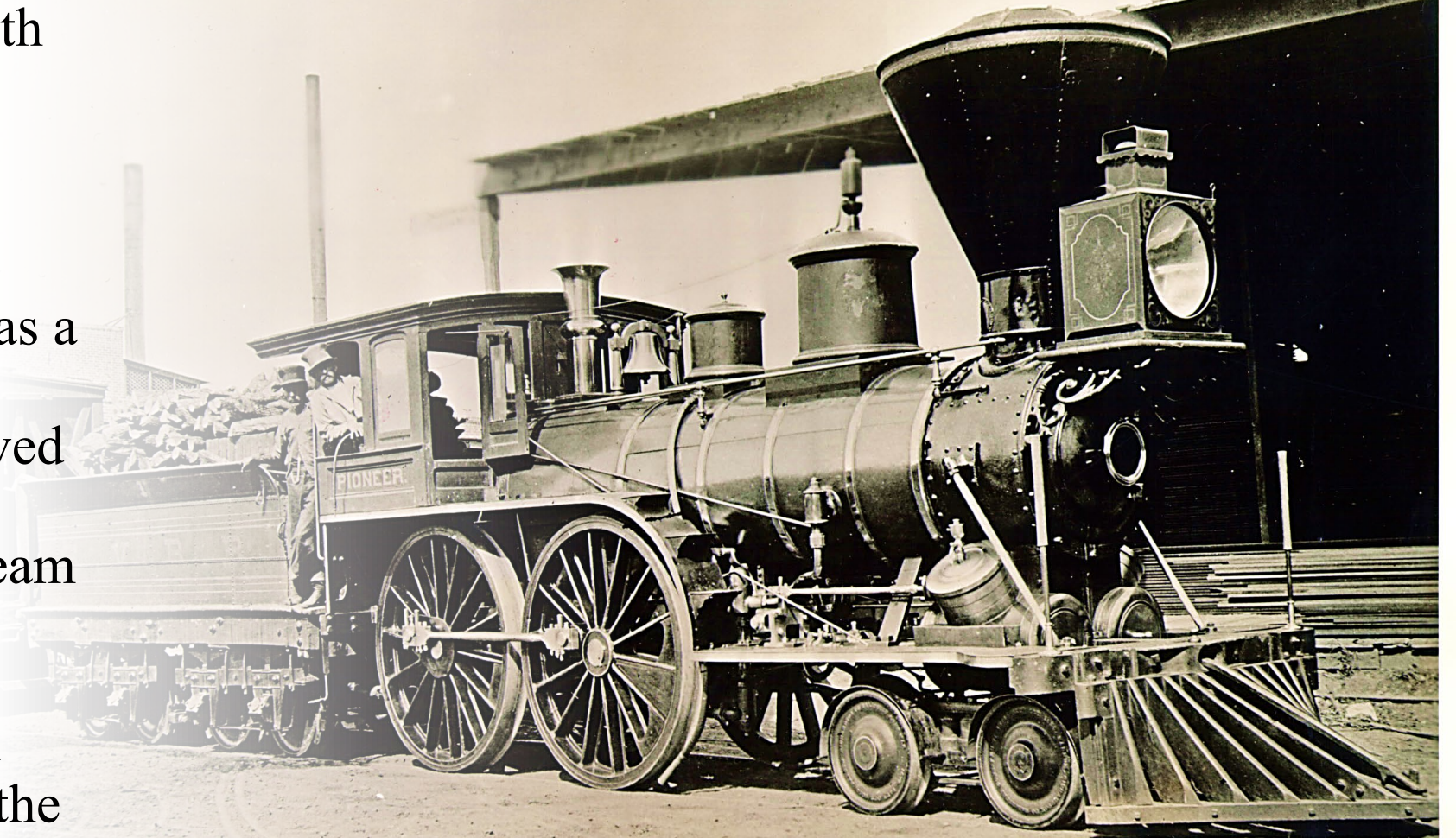
Lillian Bounds Disney.  
© Retlaw Enterprises, Inc.

*Lillian B. Disney*

Holmby Hills, California



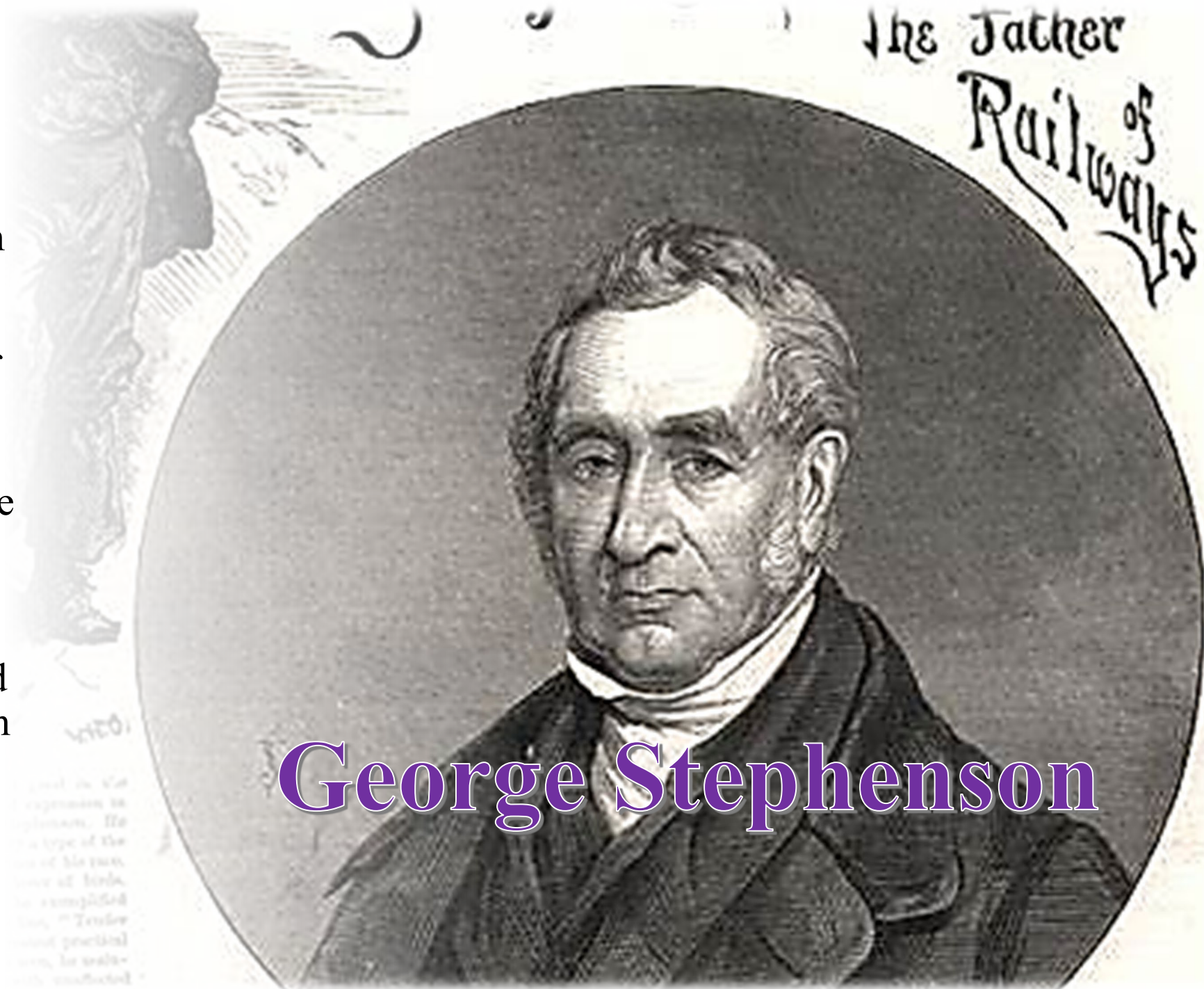
The invention of the steam locomotive in the early 19th century revolutionized the way humans traveled, transported goods, and connected communities across vast distances. It was a marvel of its time—a machine that not only moved people physically but also inspired generations to dream of boundless possibilities. The rhythmic churning of steam engines symbolized progress, innovation, and the human spirit's unrelenting pursuit of greatness.



## Centennial Celebration



One of the earliest pioneers, **George Stephenson**, known as the “Father of Railways,” was instrumental in bringing steam trains to the forefront of transportation. His invention of the *Rocket*, one of the first efficient steam locomotives, proved that railroads could be the backbone of modern infrastructure. Stephenson’s vision transformed rural towns into bustling hubs of commerce and industry, proving that the steam locomotive was more than a machine—it was a vessel of change.



George Stephenson

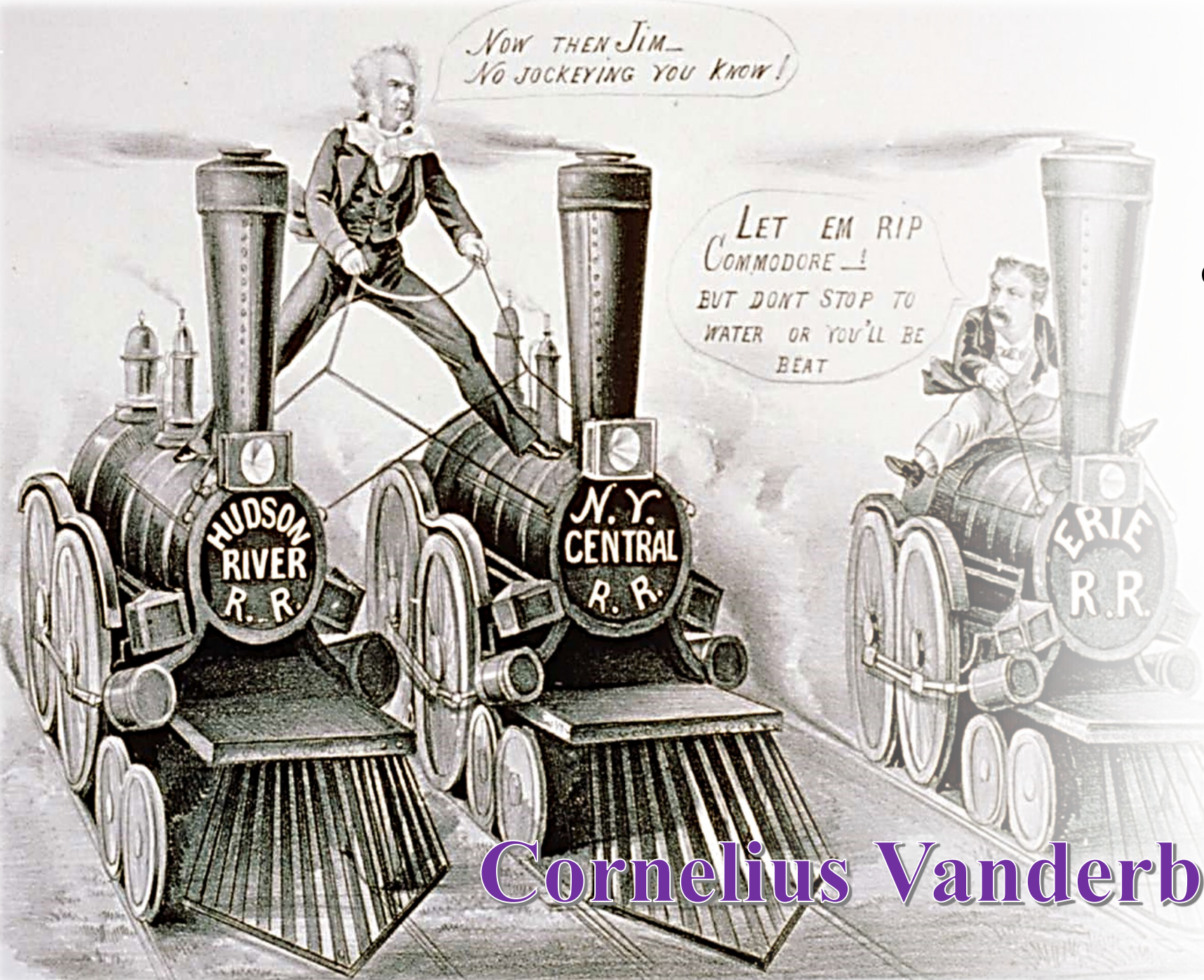


Following Stephenson's lead, **Isambard Kingdom Brunel**, a British engineer, took the concept of railroads to new heights. His Great Western Railway showcased his brilliance in designing tracks, tunnels, and bridges that were ahead of their time. Brunel understood that steam trains could not only unify cities but also ignite imagination, paving the way for technological advancements across industries.



**Isambard Kingdom Brunel**

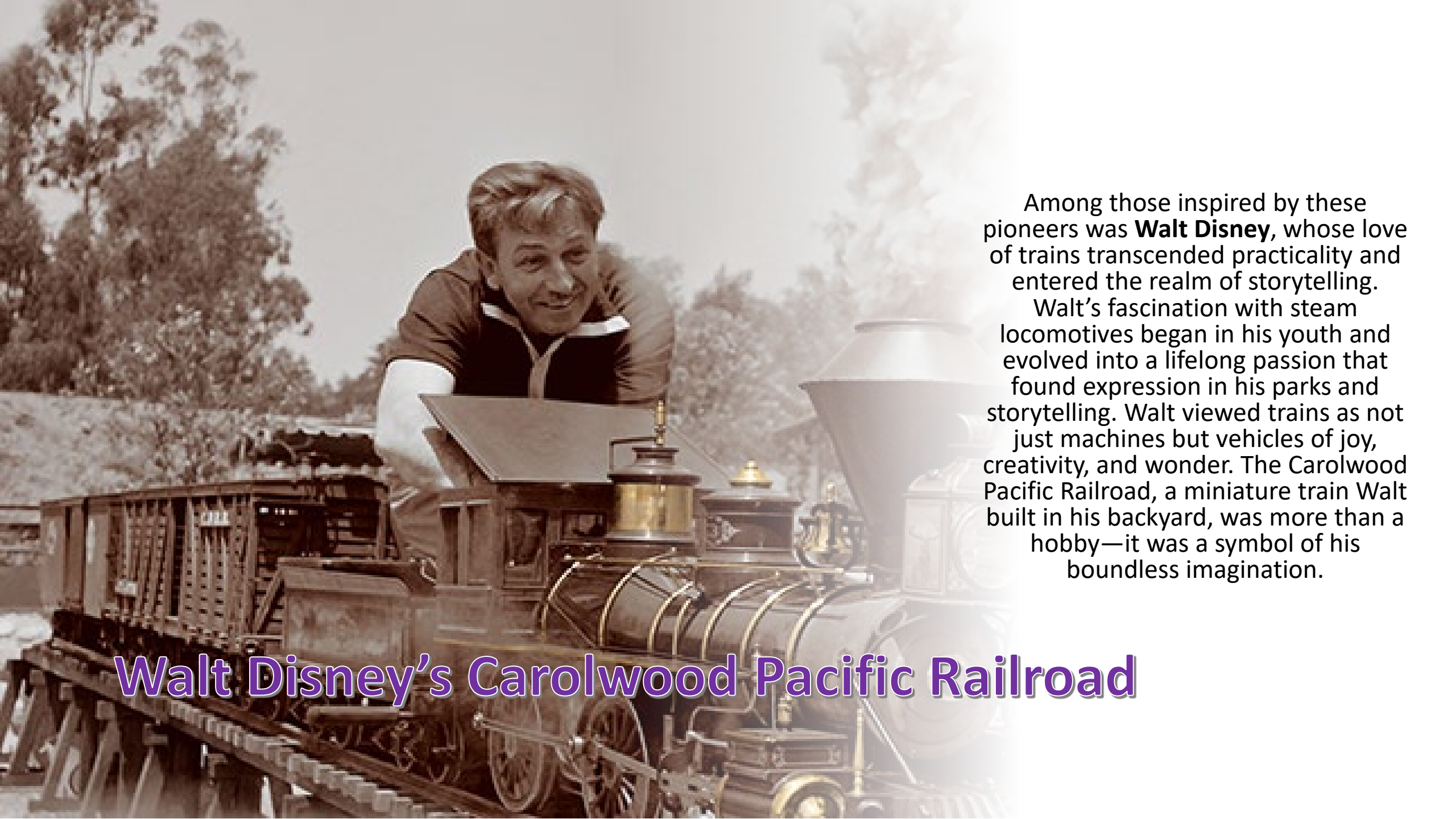




In America, **Cornelius Vanderbilt** embraced the potential of railroads, expanding networks that connected the East and West coasts. Vanderbilt's entrepreneurial drive solidified the importance of steam trains in shaping the nation's economic growth. He recognized that the iron tracks were more than a means of transportation—they were lifelines binding communities and forging opportunities.

# Cornelius Vanderbilt





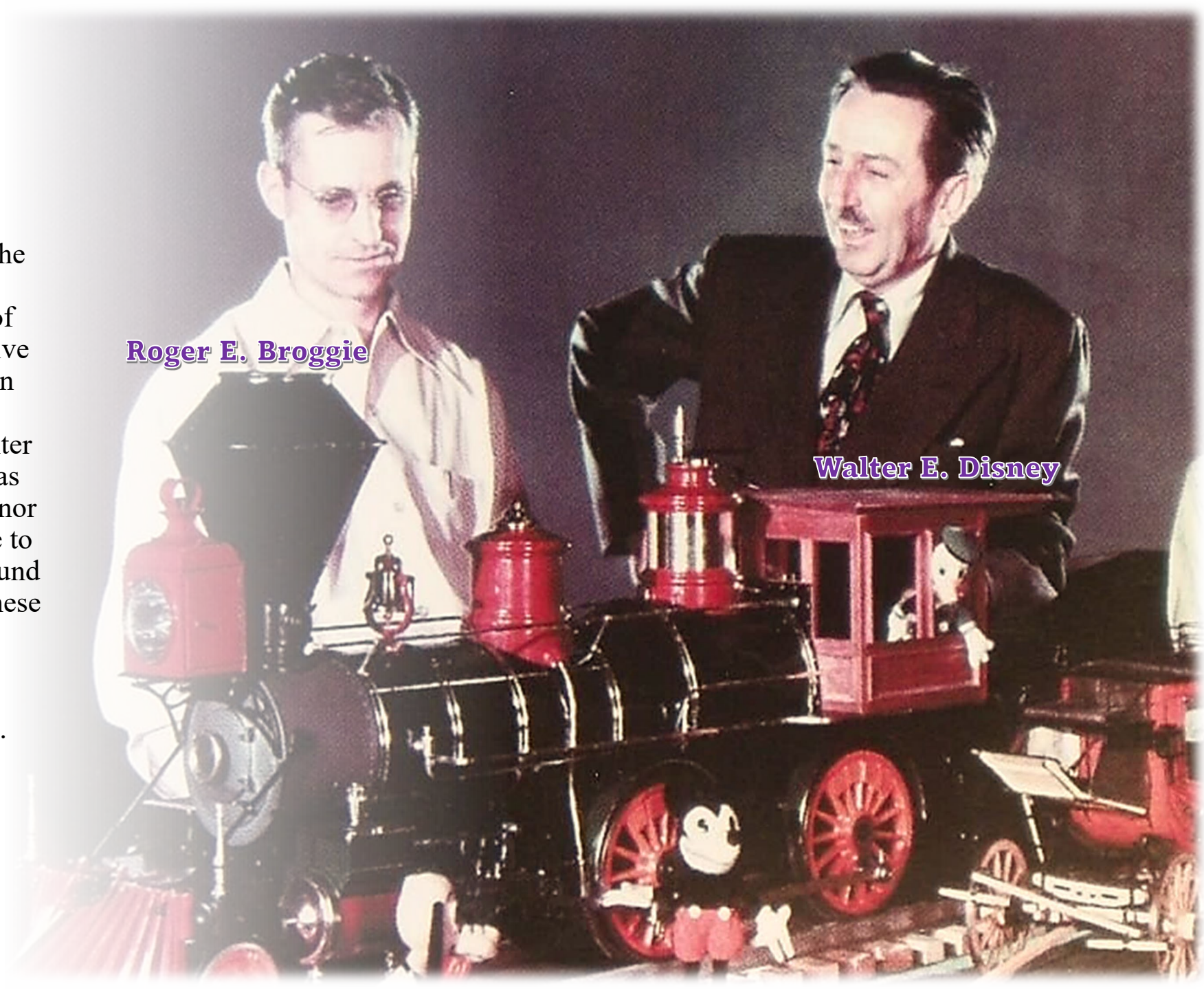
Among those inspired by these pioneers was **Walt Disney**, whose love of trains transcended practicality and entered the realm of storytelling.

Walt's fascination with steam locomotives began in his youth and evolved into a lifelong passion that found expression in his parks and storytelling. Walt viewed trains as not just machines but vehicles of joy, creativity, and wonder. The Carolwood Pacific Railroad, a miniature train Walt built in his backyard, was more than a hobby—it was a symbol of his boundless imagination.

## Walt Disney's Carolwood Pacific Railroad



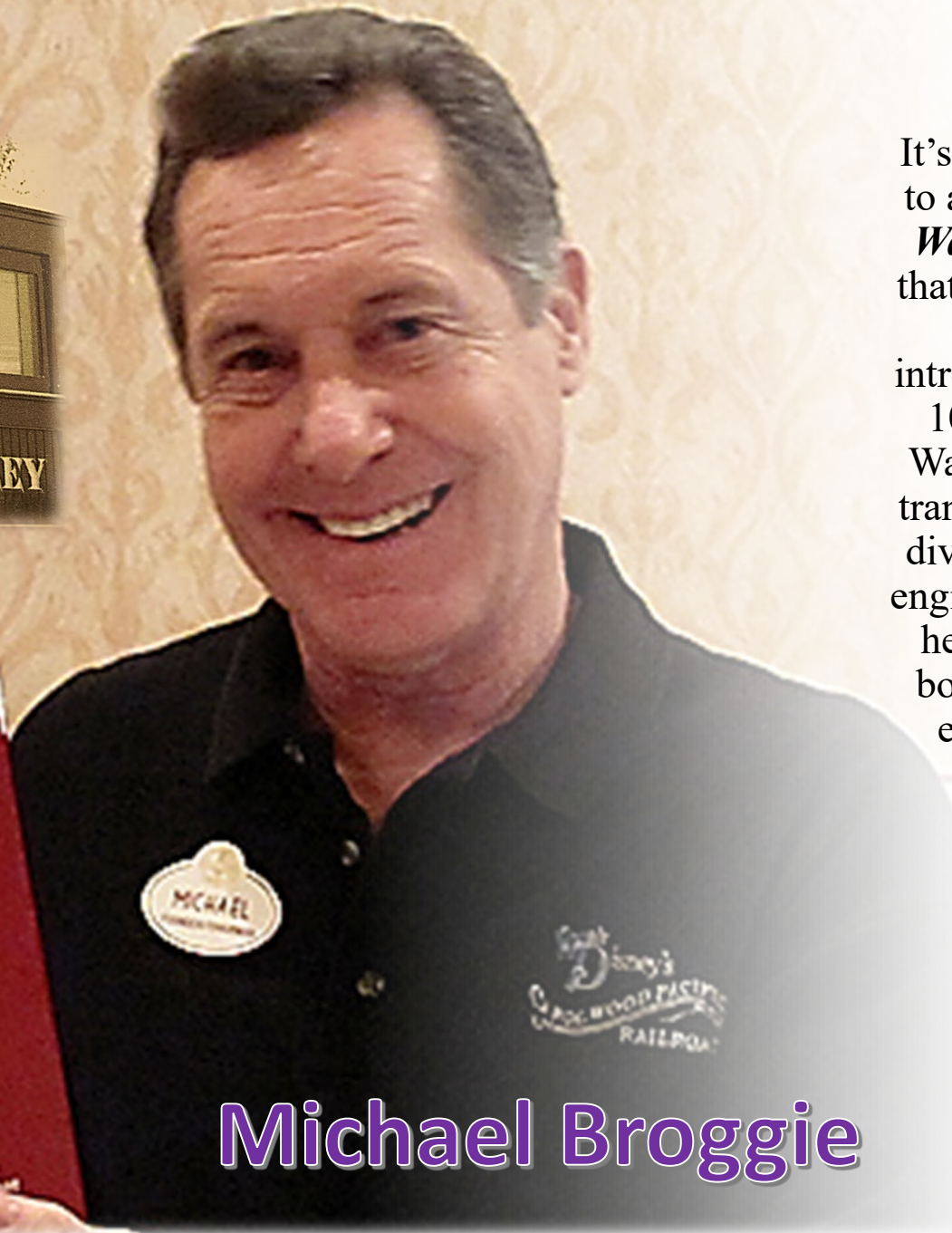
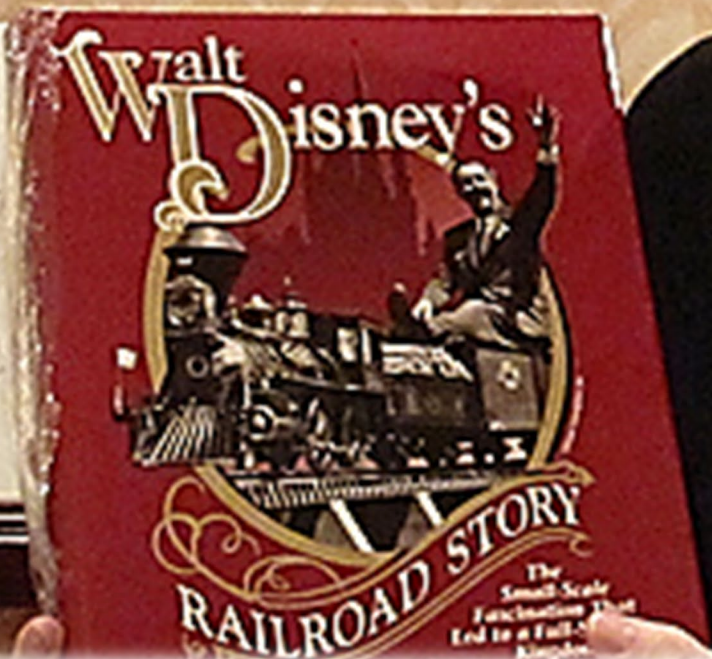
In 1969, Roger E. Broggie, on behalf of the Walt Disney Company, acquired five locomotives from the United Railways of Yucatan in Mérida, Mexico. Among the five were two twin trains built by the Baldwin Locomotive Works in 1925. The first locomotive of the two was named the Walter E. Disney (No. 1), and the second one was named the Roger E. Broggie (No. 3) in honor of Disney's first imagineer. They continue to transport millions of guests every year around Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida. These trains celebrate Walt Disney's enduring passion for steam power engines and storytelling, preserving the Universal Language of Inspiration and Innovation.



Roger E. Broggie

Walter E. Disney



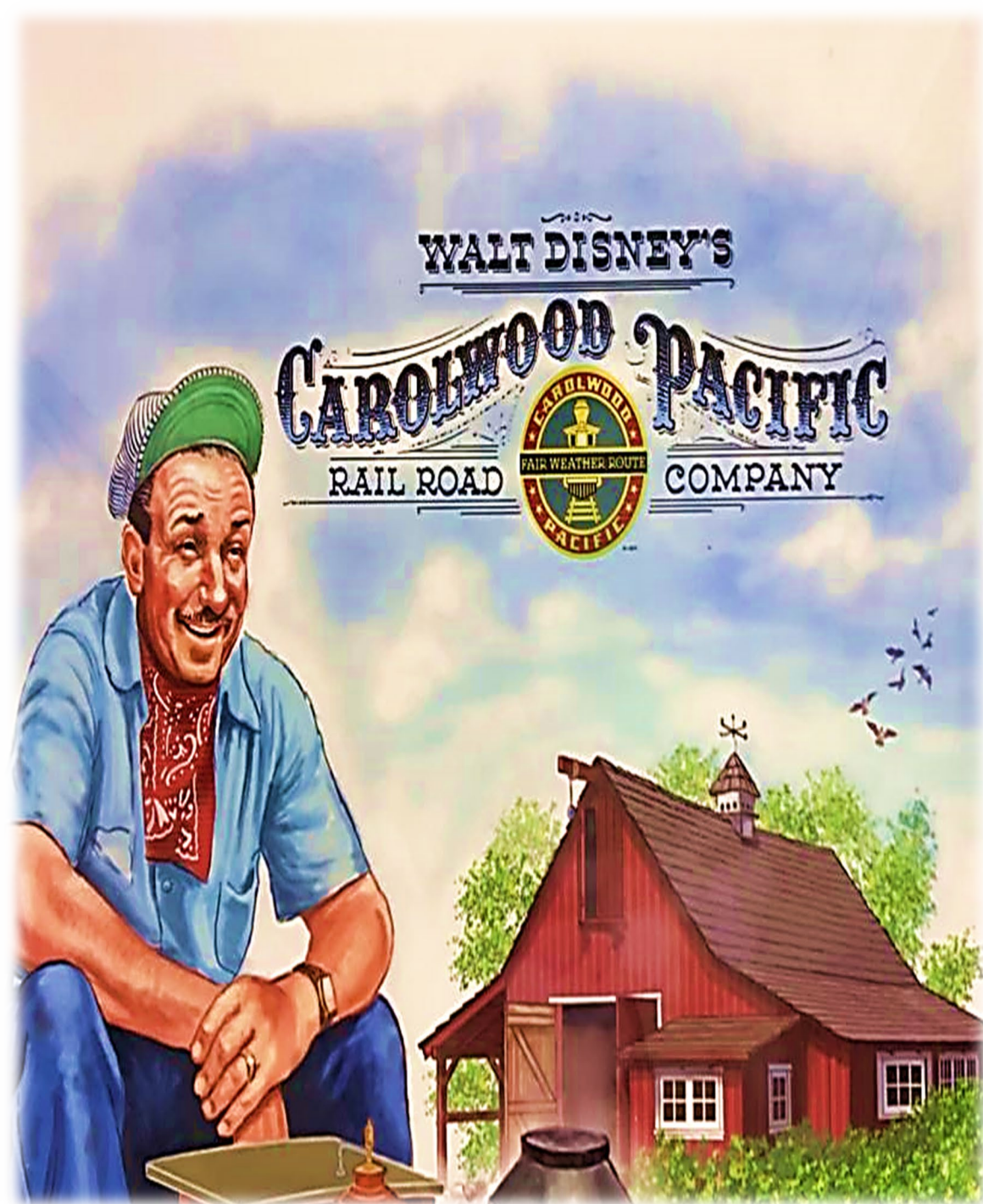
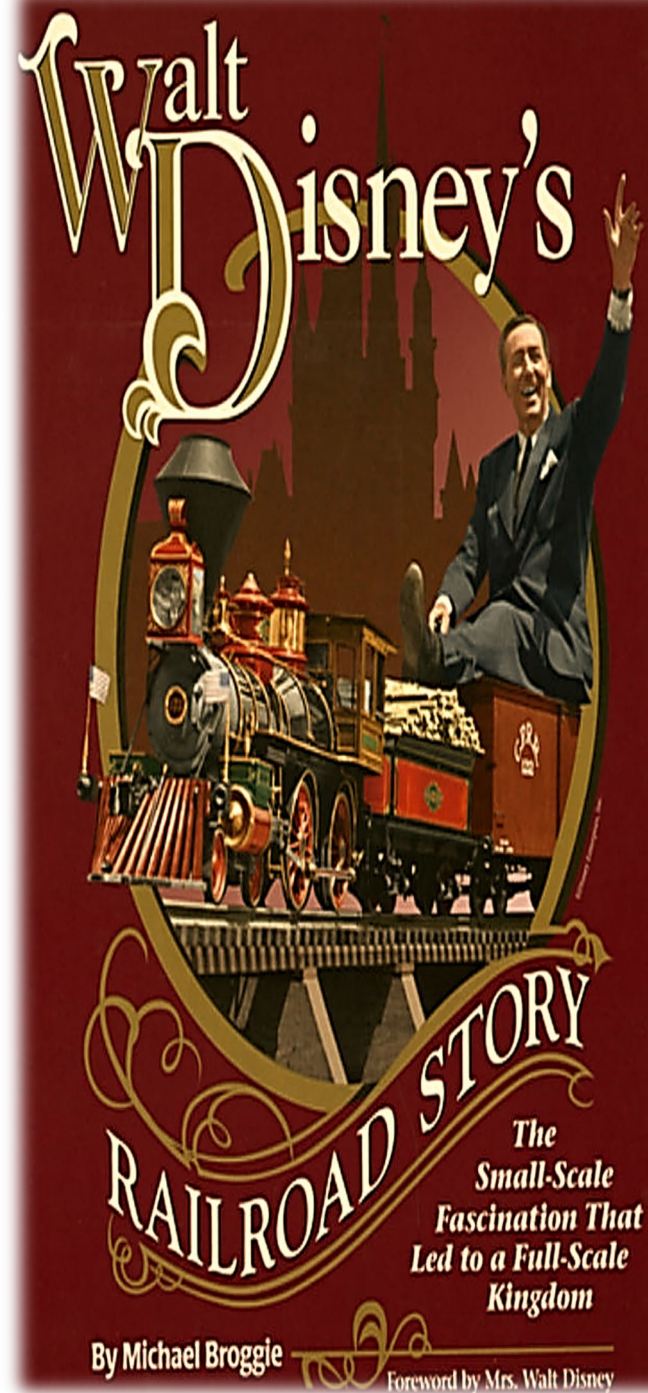


It's my honor to bring this amazing story to a broader audience by translating *The Walt Disney Railroad Story* in Spanish that was written by Roger Broggie. Years in the making, it seemed fitting to introduce this masterpiece celebrating the 100 Year Anniversary of two trains to Walt Disney fans around the world. The translation serves as a bridge, connecting diverse audiences to the legacy of steam engine trains and Walt's vision and legacy he's left behind. It is my hope that this book inspires a new generation of train enthusiast, storytellers, creators, and dreamers to keep the Magic of the Carolwood Foundation alive in preserving Walt Disney's Railroad Legacy.

Gilbert L Feliciano

Michael Broggie









The legacy of steam train engines is not merely about their mechanics but their ability to transport us to new horizons—both real and imagined. From George Stephenson to Walt Disney, and Roger Broggie, Disney's First Imagineer and now you the readers of this book, the story of steam power engines remains a testament to the enduring spirit of innovation and the power to dream.



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