

The Steam Man

In 1868, American author Edward S. Ellis wrote about a prodigy that constructed an automaton called the Steam Man, the first American robot.

"It was about ten feet in height, measuring to the top of the 'stove-pipe hat', which was fashioned after the common order of felt coverings, with a broad brim, all painted a shiny black. The face was made of iron, painted a black colour, with a pair of fearful eyes, and a tremendous grinning mouth. A whistle-like contrivance was made to answer for the nose. The steam chest proper and boiler were where the chest in a human being is generally supposed to be, extending also into a large knapsack arrangement over the shoulders and back. A pair of arms, like projections, held the shafts and the broad flat feet were covered with sharp spikes, as though he were the monarch of baseball players. The legs were quite long, and the step was natural, except when running, at which time, the bolt uprightness in the figure showed differed from a human being. In the knapsack were the valves, by which the steam or water was examined. In front was a painted imitation of a vest, in which a door opened to receive the fuel, which, together with the water, was carried in the wagon, a pipe ran along the shaft and connecting with the boiler."

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