NICHOLAS J. ROOSEVELT, inventor and engineer, was born in New York City, Dec. 27, 1767, son of Jacobus and Annetje Bogard Roosevelt. He was a descendant of Klaes Martensen Van Roosevelt, who came from the Netherlands to New Amsterdam (now New York City) in 1649.

His father was a shopkeeper in New York and served in the New York colonial troops as a private. Nicholas Roosevelt received a good education and developed a great love for things mechanical. As early as 1782 when he was living on the farm of Joseph Oosterhaudt, near Esopus, N. Y., he built a model boat, propelled by paddle wheels over the sides The wheels were turned by hickory and whalebone springs which unwound a cord wrapped around the wheel axes.

After the evacuation of New York by the British Roosevelt returned there to pursue his mechanical interests. In 1793 he became a Director of the New Jersey Copper Mine Association, a company organized to rework the abandoned Schuyler Copper Mine, an enterprise which was given up eighteen months later. Meanwhile he had become much interested in steam engines and their manufacture, and succeeded in inducing his associates to purchase some land on Second River, now Belleville, New Jersey, where he erected a metal foundry and shop. Following the completion of these works, called Soho after the establishment of Boulton and Watt in England, Roosevelt's associates retired and left him to carry on the enterprise along. Sanguine and ambitious, he at first had some success building engines for various purposes, including those for the Philadelphia Water Works. He also contracted to erect a rolling mill to supply the federal government with copper, drawn and rolled, for six 74-gun ships which were to be built, the motive power having been planned by Robert Fulton. After he had gone to great expense to complete this contract, a change in administration caused the abandonment of the ship's construction and a consequent great financial loss to Roosevelt.

About 1797 he entered into an agreement with Robert R. Livingston and John Stevens to build a steamboat as a joint venture, the engines for which were to be fabricated in his foundry. The work of building this experimental boat was slow and tedious and it was not until the middle of 1798 that steam was applied to the machinery. At first the boat was not successful, but on a trial trip, Oct. 21, 1798, after improvements had been made, the Palacca, as she had been named, attained a speed of three miles an hour in still water. During the construction of this vessel Roosevelt tried to induce Livingston to use paddle wheels over the sides, but Livingston would have nothing to do with such a plan. In 1801 Livingston was appointed U. S. Minister to France and the whole undertaking was dropped. By this time Roosevelt's business was in such chaotic condition that he was compelled to abandon his works entirely.

In 1809 he became associated with Robert Fulton in the proposed introduction of steamboats on Western rivers and in 1811 built at Pittsburgh the steamboat New Orleans. In this pioneer craft he descended the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers from Pittsburgh to New Orleans. In the belief he was entitled to a patent for use of vertical paddle wheels, he now applied for such a patent, which was granted to him on December 1, 1814. The following January he applied to the New Jersey Legislature for protection as the inventor of such paddle wheels, but the Legislature decided, primarily because of the objections of Fulton and Livingston, that "it was inexpedient to make any special provisions in connection with the matter in controversy before the body," and there the disputed matter rested. Roosevelt soon retired from active work and resided for the remainder of his life with his family in Skaneateles, Onondaga County, New York. He married in Washington, D. C. on November 15, 1808, Lydia Latrobe, daughter of the elder Benjamin Henry Latrobe, (1764-1820) of Baltimore, Maryland, by whom he had nine children, six of whom died in their early youth. Nicholas J. Roosevelt died on July 30, 1854.

JOHN HAZLEHURST BONEVAL LATROBE, son of Benjamin Henry Latrobe, Sr. (1764-1820) and Mary Elizabeth Hazlehurst, was born in Philadelphia May 4, 1803. He was a writer, lawyer, engineer, inventor and public servant. He received his early education at Georgetown College, Washington, D.C., and at St. Mary's College, Baltimore. From 1818 to 1821 he was a cadet at West Point, in what was then the only school of engineering in the country, but resigned after the death of his father shortly before the end of his fourth year. He returned to Baltimore and entered the law office of Robert Goodloe Harper, and was admitted to the bar in 1824. In 1827 he helped to draft the charter of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, and in 1828 he was retained by the railroad to secure its right-of-way from Point of Rocks to Williamsport, Mary-land. From that time until his death he was connected with the Baltimore & Ohio, and attained wide recognition as a railroad lawyer. He argued many important cases in the State and Federal Supreme Courts, and was in special demand as a patent lawyer, partly because of the engineering training he had received at West Point. His technical understanding enabled him to recognize at once the value of the Morse telegraph and to recommend it to the President of the Baltimore & Ohio, who granted Morse the privilege of stringing the first line between Baltimore and Washington along the railroad's right-of-way. He devised, among other things, the popular Latrobe Stove, which fitted into the fireplace and heated not only the room in which it was installed, but also the room above. In 1868 he published The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, Personal Recollections. He served as President of the Maryland Historical Society from 1871 until 1891. He married first on November 29, 1828, Margaret Stuart of Baltimore, who died two years later leaving one child. He married second on December 6, 1832, Charlotte Virginia Claiborne, of Mississippi, by whom he had seven children.