



2022 NATIONAL INVENTORS
HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

Born: May 23, 1820

Died: March 8, 1887

Primary Connections:

- Academy of Science of St. Louis: Co-founder

Key memberships/awards:

- National Railroad Hall of Fame: Inductee
- National Rivers Hall of Fame: Inductee, 1986
- Hall of Fame for Great Americans: Inductee, 1920
- Royal Society of Arts (England): Albert Medal, 1884
- American Society of Civil Engineers: Vice President, 1882-83; Fellow, 1870
- American Association for the Advancement of Science: Fellow, 1879
- National Academy of Sciences: Elected Member, 1872

10 Things You Need to Know About

James Buchanan Eads

American Infrastructure and Defense

U.S. PATENT NOS. 83,942 & 170,832

1. Eads was born in 1820 in Lawrenceburg, Indiana.
2. As a young man, he traveled to Washington, D.C., and wrote in a letter home that he found the United States Patent Office “most absorbing.”
3. In 1842, Eads developed an adaptation of the diving bell and went into the salvage business.
4. Prior to the Civil War, he recognized the strategic importance of the Mississippi River and advanced the idea of ironclad boats.
5. The Academy of Science of St. Louis’ James B. Eads Award recognizes a distinguished individual for outstanding achievement in engineering or technology.
6. James B. Eads Hall at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, was erected in 1902-03 and was a gift to the university from his daughter, Eliza Ann Eads How.
7. In 1930, Villanova University’s School of Technology invited U.S. engineering deans to name the greatest engineers of all time. Eads ranked fourth in the voting, behind only James Watt, Leonardo da Vinci and Thomas Edison.
8. Eads’ story was told in PBS’ series “American Experience.” The episode, titled “Secrets of a Master Builder: How James Eads Tamed the Mighty Mississippi,” originally aired in October 2000.
9. He held more than 50 U.S. patents.
10. Eads died in 1887 in Nassau, Bahamas.