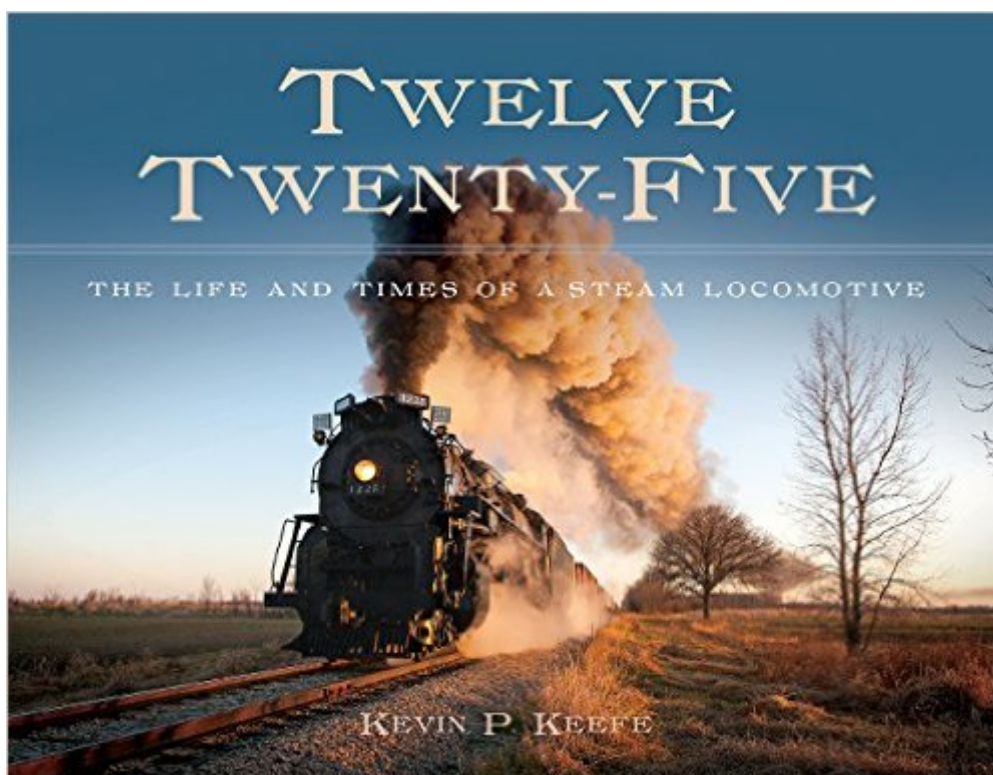


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# Twelve Twenty-Five: The Life And Times Of A Steam Locomotive



## Synopsis

The against-all-odds story of a World War II "era steam locomotive and the determination of two generations of volunteers to keep it running comes alive in *Twelve Twenty-Five: The Life and Times of a Steam Locomotive*. The Pere Marquette 1225 was built in 1941 at the peak of steam locomotive development. The narrative traces the 1225's regular freight service in Michigan, its unlikely salvation from the scrapyard for preservation at Michigan State University, and the subsequent work to bring it back to steam, first by a student club and later by a railroad museum. Milestones along the way include 1225's retirement in 1951, its donation to MSU in 1957, its return to steam in 1988, a successful career hauling tens of thousands of excursion riders, and its starring role in the 2004 movie *The Polar Express*. The massive infrastructure that supported American steam locomotives in their heyday disappeared long ago, forcing 1225's faithful to make their own spare parts, learn ancient railroad skills, and interpret the entire effort for the public. As such, the continuing career of 1225 is a triumph of historic preservation.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book was a blast! If you enjoy history and learning then this is a great introduction to the history of railroads. It gives enough detail to satisfy informed rail fans, but if you are a "layman" like myself it is wonderful getting the big picture as the author walks you through the advent of railroads and the key technological developments that culminated in the great steam locomotives of the early 20th century. It feels like a distant era now, in part because it vanished with the advent of diesel power as

suddenly as the dinosaurs did when the comet hit. What makes this book so unique and fascinating is that it ultimately focuses on the fate of one lone dinosaur/locomotive stationed on a detached rail spur outside the Michigan State University stadium. The story of how it got there and how it got restored against seemingly impossible odds - and even became a movie star! - was so intriguing that I read through the book in one afternoon. There are only a half dozen of the big ones around that are still functioning, and this one has to be the most improbable of all. DISCLAIMER: the author has been a lifelong friend, so I have been well aware of his fascination with trains. I was even aware of his involvement in the 1225 project at MSU but I never realized how utterly extraordinary this story was until I was able to place it all in perspective with this book. I know enough history to know that the best stories are the ones that, if included in a work of fiction, would make you say, "Awww, that would never happen!" And yet it did. It is the same with the story of 1225. Take a ride ... you won't be disappointed!

Great history of a wonderful engine that is only 30 miles away. I must go visit

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