

## HISTORY AUDIO-DATEI

Beach's  
Secret Subway... mehr in der **PRINTAUSGABE:****FEATURE Englische Artikel mit Vokabelhilfe****TECHNOLOGY Fachwissen auf Englisch****LANGUAGE Vokabel- und Grammatikübungen****WELTWEIT Interkulturelle Kommunikation****RUBRIKEN Neues aus Technik und Business**... mehr unter [www.engine-magazin.de](http://www.engine-magazin.de)Beach's Secret **Subway**

**New Yorks allererste U-Bahn wurde heimlich gebaut, war nur 100 Meter lang und wurde per Druckluft angetrieben. Obwohl eine Sensation geriet Alfred Beachs Riesen-Rohrpost bald in Vergessenheit.**

Alfred Ely Beach was *upper-crust*. He was educated at Yale and given management of the New York Sun newspaper by his father in 1848. He was only 22 when he took over the Sun's offices in the Wall Street area. By then, Manhattan was just becoming a high-population-density *nightmare*. But Beach was a young man with ideas. Already, two years before, he'd bought the one-year-old Scientific American magazine. He also opened a major patent agency that would deal with clients like Morse, Edison, Bell, and Ericsson.

All the while, Beach watched Manhattan's streets growing hopelessly dirty and dangerous as four or five horse-drawn omnibuses *rattled* by each minute. He turned his attention to urban rail service. The British had just built a small experimental subway line in London, but it'd be another thirty years before regular subway service was finally *established* in America.

In 1866, Beach *petitioned* the City for something called a postal *dispatch charter*. That was actually a *smokescreen* – a way to get authorization to build a subway system without letting the city of New York know what he was doing. He meant to start with a small 300-foot demonstration line under Broadway. He had to keep it secret from the corrupt Boss Tweed because he knew Tweed would *extort* extra money before he'd let him dig.

To cut the tunnel, Beach *improved* on Marc Brunel's hydraulic shield design. (Later, the English turned around and used Beach's design in their tunneling.) Brunel had begun the first tunnel under the Thames River in London, and his son Isambard finished it. Like Brunel, Beach put his own son in charge of cutting their nine-foot-diameter hole. Father and son worked in secret at night, trucking dirt off in wagons with *muffled* wheels.

The finished system had a single pneumatically-driven car that *shuttled* people between two *sumptuous* stations with paintings, frescoes, and fine furniture. It cost Beach \$350,000.

When the subway opened, Boss Tweed was first *flabbergasted*, then *enraged*. Tweed managed to close Beach down within a year, but, not long after that, he fell victim to the great political

	accused
	corruption ... restored
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	grave
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dampened	
run	
luxurious	
surprised ... provoked	

cartoonist, Thomas Nast. He was *indicted* for *graft*, and Beach's charter was *reinstated*. But then a stock-market collapse put Beach out of business for good. His subway was sealed up and forgotten.

Then, in 1912, a remarkable event: Workers digging an extension of the BMT subway line suddenly broke through into the old tunnel. It could've been King Tut's *tomb* with all that sealed-up elegance – the old rail car, the décor, and Beach's hydraulic shield.

Today Beach's tube is a part of the BMT line. Of course, his *legacy* is much larger than a fragment of the BMT. He pioneered the art of tunnelling. He helped establish the century-and-a-half-year-old Scientific American magazine. But, primarily, he was a dreamer ahead of his time. And no great technology has ever been established without dreamers like Alfred Ely Beach pointing the way. ■

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<i>charter</i>	Frachtvertrag, Urkunde
<i>dispatch</i>	Auslieferung, Abfertigung
<i>enrage, to</i>	erzürnen
<i>establish, to</i>	aufbauen, eröffnen
<i>extort, to</i>	erpressen, abnötigen
<i>flabbergast, to</i>	verblüffen
<i>graft</i>	Bestechung
<i>improve, to</i>	verbessern
<i>indict, to</i>	anklagen
<i>legacy</i>	Vermächtnis
<i>muffle, to</i>	dämpfen
<i>nightmare</i>	Alptraum
<i>petition, to</i>	beantragen, ersuchen
<i>rattle, to</i>	klappern, scheppern
<i>reinstate, to</i>	wieder in Kraft setzen
<i>shuttle, to</i>	hin- und herfahren
<i>smokescreen</i>	Vorwand, Deckmantel
<i>sumptuous</i>	opulent, prächtig
<i>tomb</i>	Grab
<i>upper-crust</i>	z. Oberschicht gehörend

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