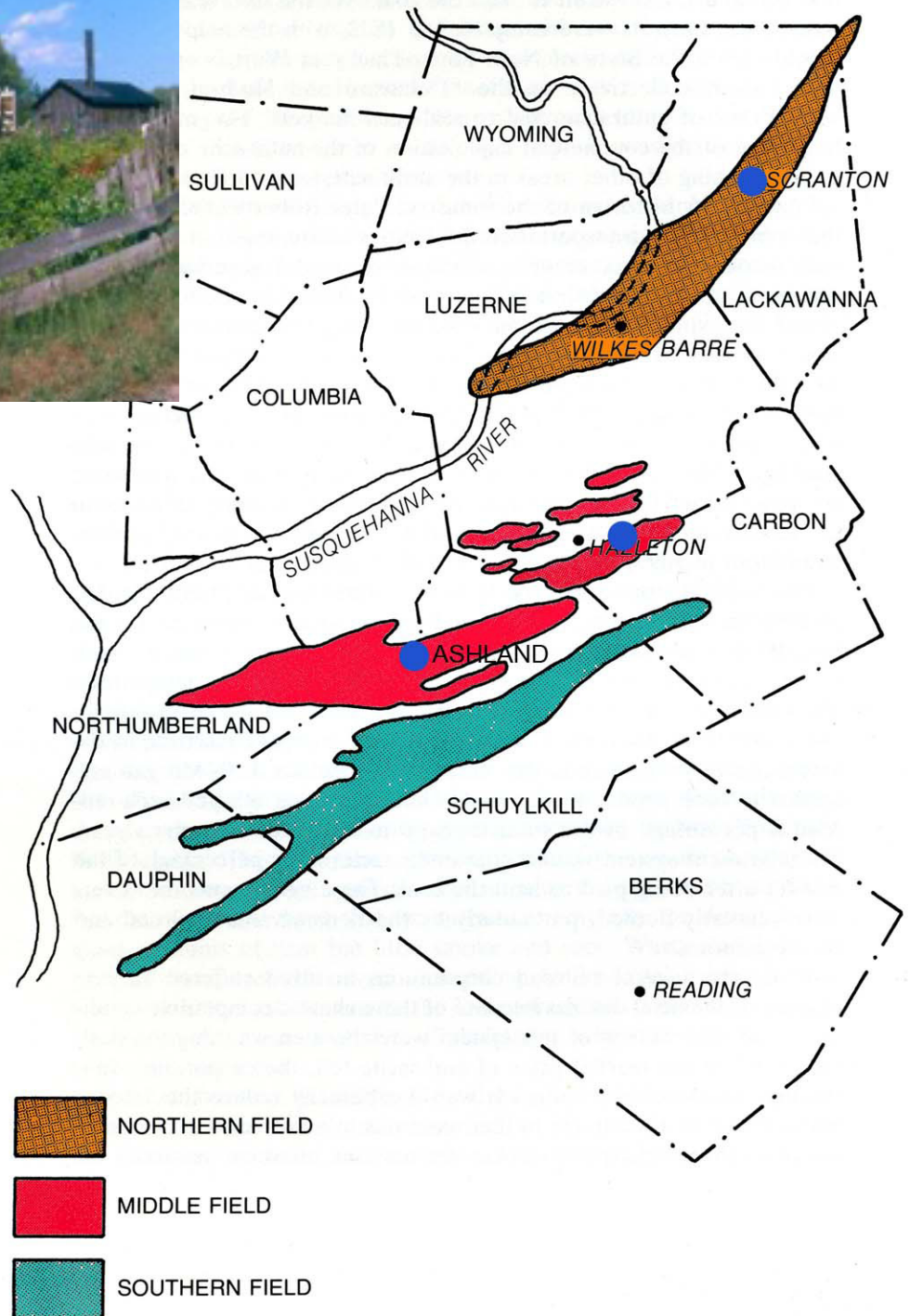


# Anthracite Industry Historical Sites

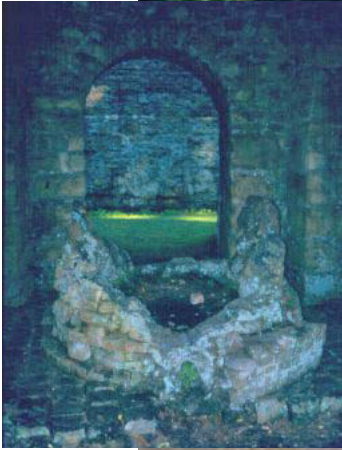
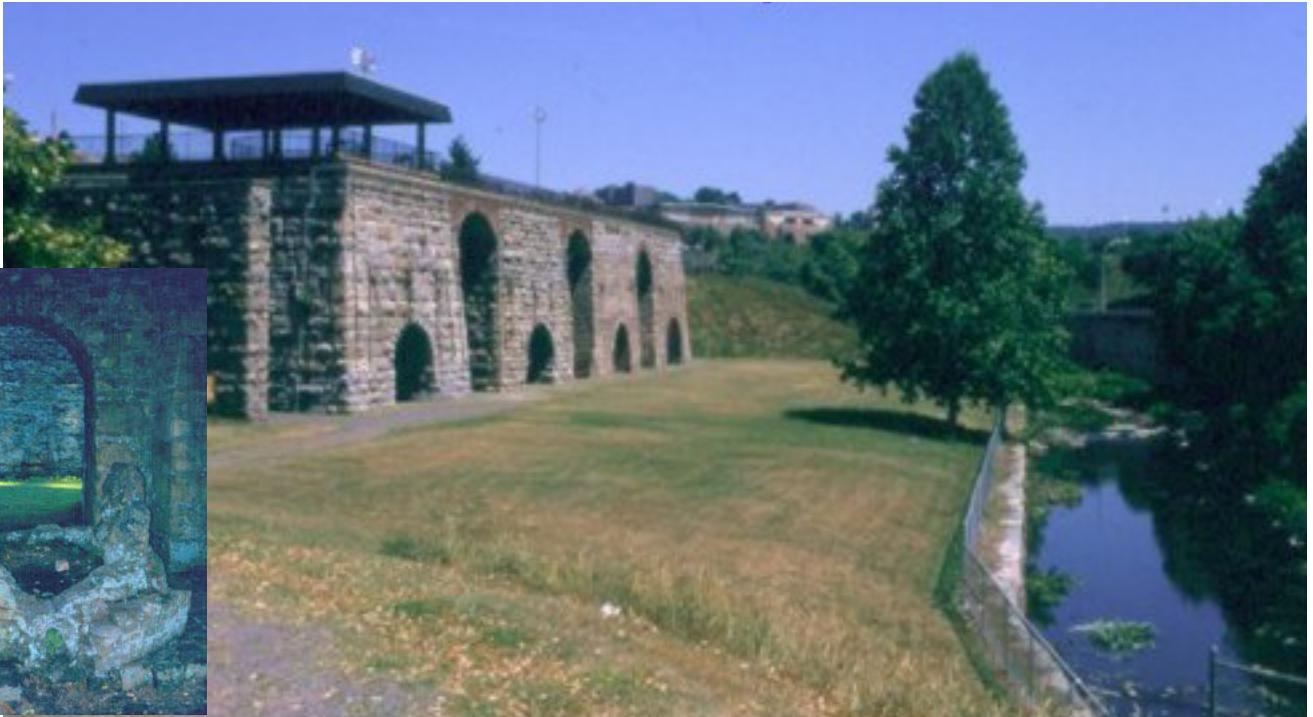


THE ANTHRACITE COAL BASINS

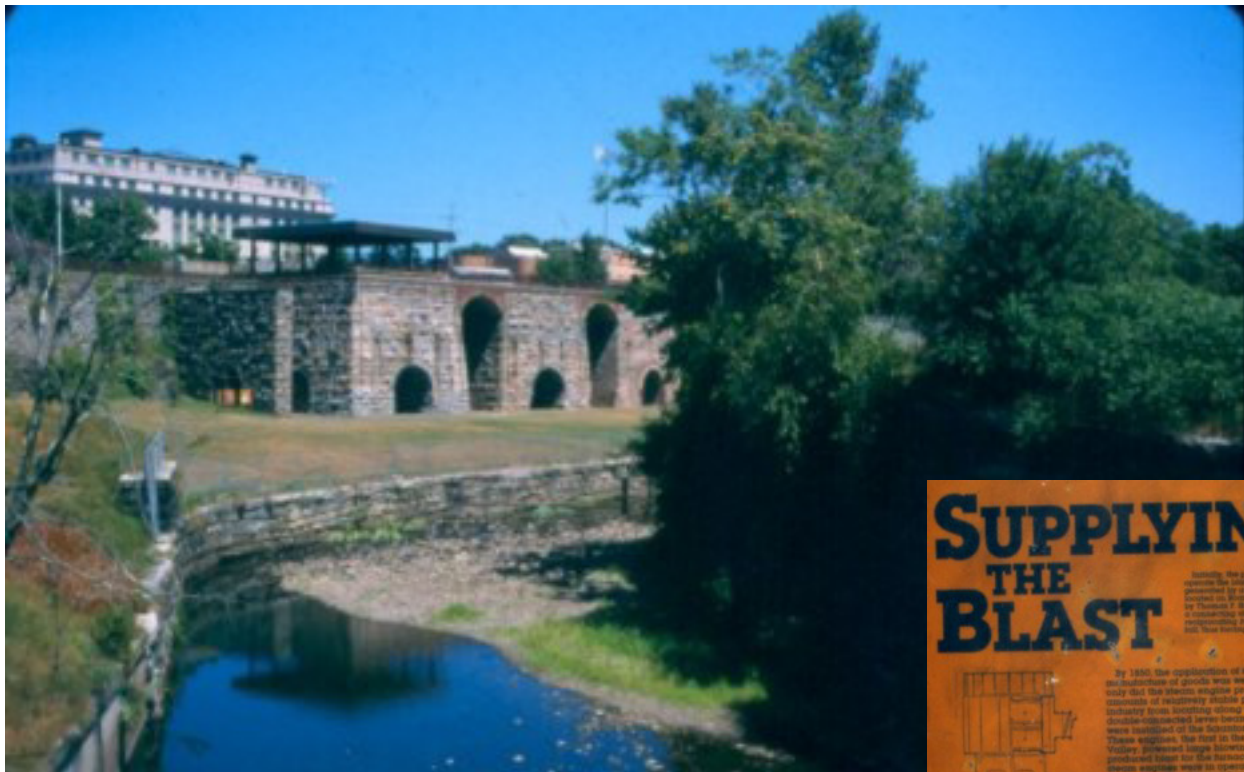


There are six sites in two counties related to Anthracite, three in Scranton, two in Ashland, and the Eckley Miners Village east of Hazleton. There are two underground mine tours - one each in Ashland and Scranton - a preserved coal company town, an iron furnace complex, and two indoor museums. You'll need at least two days to see everything, and that doesn't include the Steamtown National Historic Site.

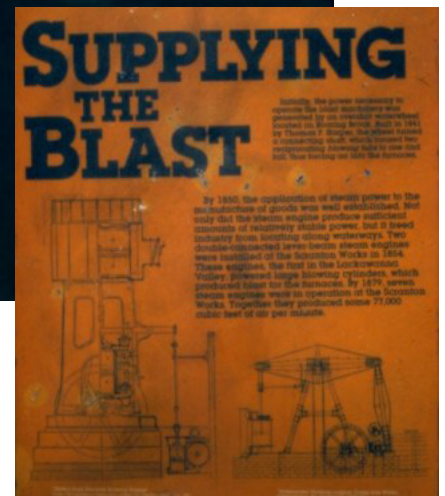
Let's start this tour in the north at Scranton. The Lackawanna Furnace site is in downtown Scranton and not far from Steamtown. Scranton was built around the iron empire of the family that gave it its name. This heritage is represented today by the restored trunks of four anthracite-fired blast furnaces near the Steamtown National Historic Site. They sit in a quiet, park-like environment where office workers now spend their lunch breaks away from the hectic pace of their post-industrial workplaces.



This pastoral park-like scene in the middle of a city is a far cry from the crowded industrial complex that once thrived here. Blooming and rolling mills that converted pig iron from the stone furnace stacks to rails and structural shapes once occupied the right foreground of this view. The large building on the left horizon in the view below is the former passenger terminal of the Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western; today it is beautifully preserved and serves as Scranton's convention center. The inset picture shows remains of the hearth at the base of one of the blast furnace stacks.



An interpretive sign near the entrance to the park illustrates the advances in steam-powered blast engine technology that supplied the hot blast to the Lackawanna furnaces.



## Anthracite Heritage Museum & Lackawanna Mine



PHMC's Anthracite Heritage Museum is next door to the privately owned and operated Lackawanna Mine. The sites are located in McDade Park (named for U.S. Representative Bill McDade) on the northwestern outskirts of Scranton. This tippel greets visitors as they approach the parking area.

The Anthracite Heritage Museum houses a large collection of artifacts, such as this power drill, relating to all facets of life and work in Pennsylvania's Anthracite Region. In addition to coal mining, the displays interpret agriculture, home life, and the textile industry, which grew as a result of the availability of cheap labor in the form of wives and daughters of coal miners.



Mine cars are posed on the tracks leading to the Lackawanna Mine tippel.

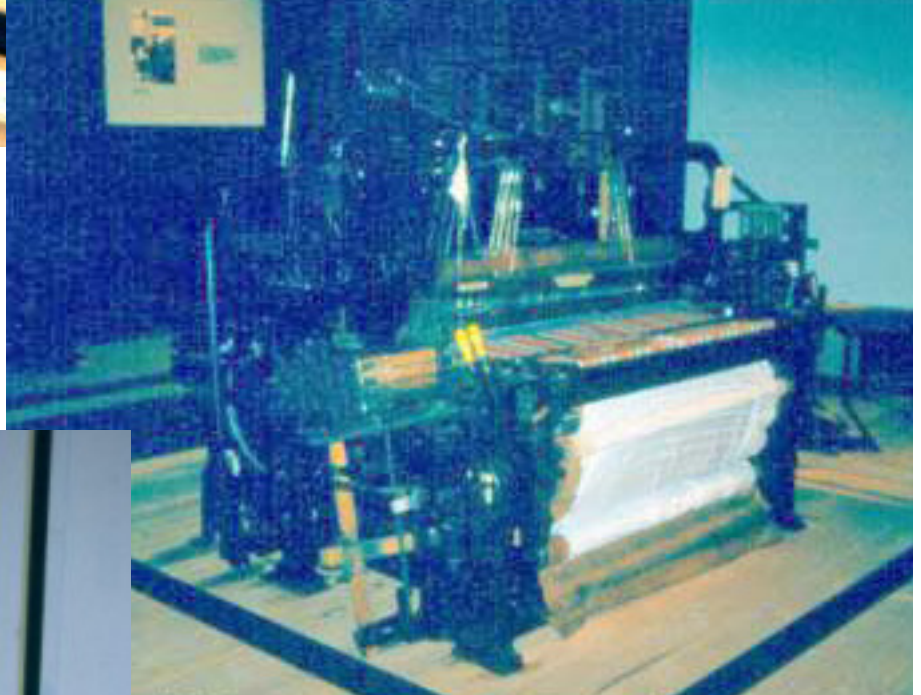


This horse-drawn dump wagon is a predecessor of the scissors-dump delivery trucks that once plied the residential streets of towns throughout the Northeast.



Here is an excellent example of a pre-industrial plow. The only metal parts are the fastenings and the tip of the plow.

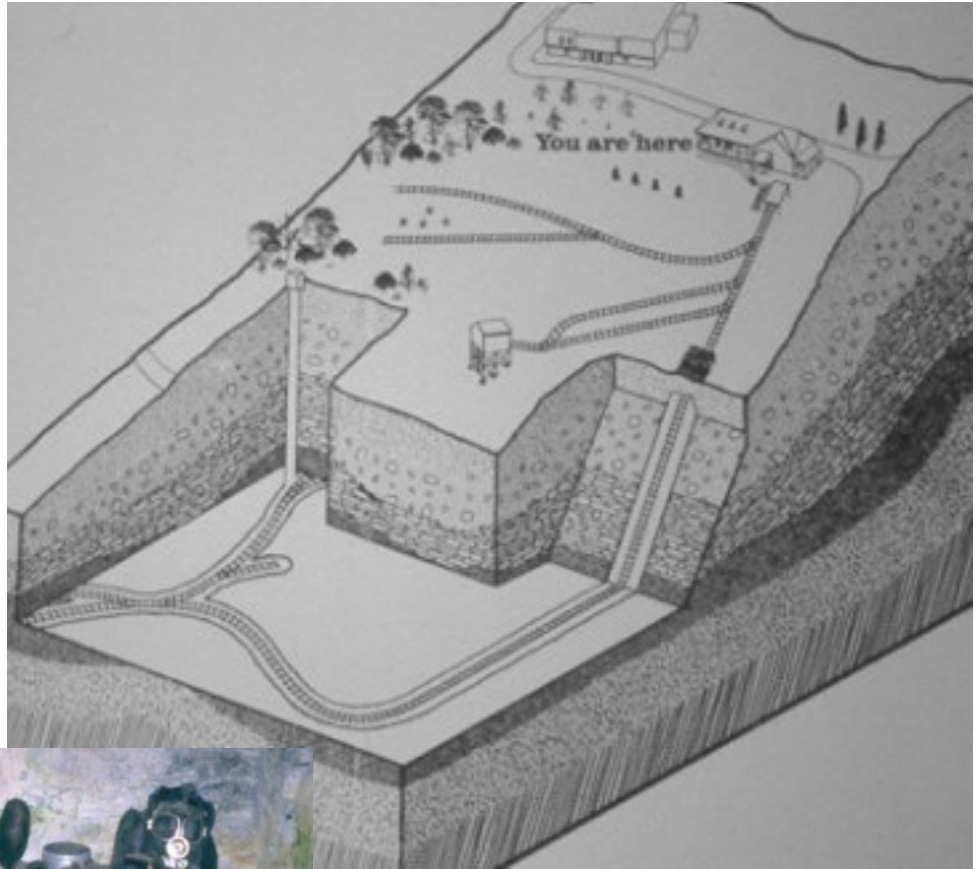
Pictured below is one of several machines in the museum's area portraying work in the silk and cotton mills of the Anthracite Region.



Miners once used hand-cranked drills like this one to drill the holes in which blasting powder was placed to "bump" the coal.

<http://www.anthracitemuseum.org/>

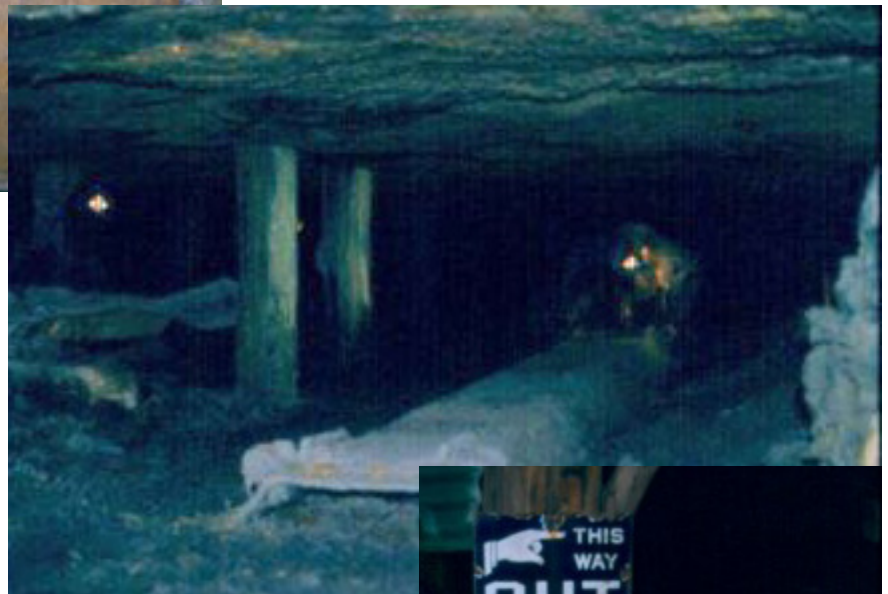
Lackawanna Mine tours take visitors underground via a steep slope. After a thrilling ride in a low-slung cable car, qualified miners take small groups on a walking tour that leaves participants with an indelible impression of what it was like to work in a deep Anthracite mine. This cut-away diagram on the surface orients visitors before going underground.



The nerve center of the underground mine was the foreman's office. This one was carved out of the rock face in the main gangway near the base of the slope.



At the low-ceilinged working face of a seam of coal, vibrating chutes were used to move the coal from the face to the gangway so it could be loaded into the cars. Two mannequins portray a miner and his helper working on their knees in the confined space. Their helmet-mounted lamps are visible in the gloom.

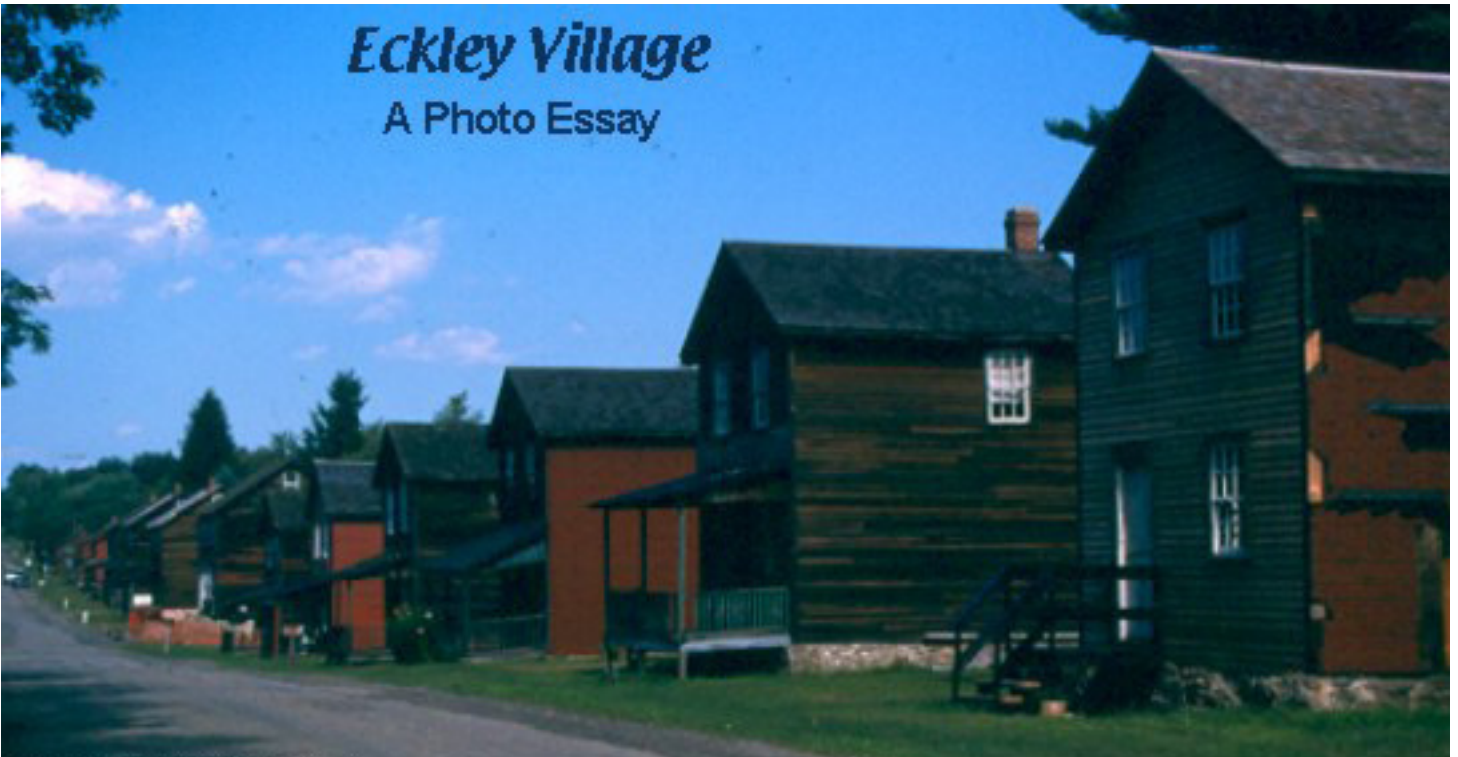


Probably the most important sign in an underground mine.

<https://www.visitnepa.org/listing/lackawanna-coal-mine-tour/196/>

# Eckley Village

## A Photo Essay



Eckley Village was a coal company town that has survived virtually intact from the Turn-of-the-Century. The town serves as an open air museum of community life in Pennsylvania's Anthracite Region. It is perhaps most famous as the setting for the folk classic movie, "The Molly Maguires," starring Sean Connery and Richard Harris.



Public funds support the back-dating of coal miners' homes to demonstrate how living conditions changed over time. The scene above shows the rear of a typical duplex company house as originally built. Small building and lean-to behind the main house housed two kitchens and fuel. Later, these out buildings were absorbed into large lean-to extensions to the main house.

"The Company Store" has entered American folklore as the focal point of turning coal miners into wage slaves. The store at Eckley Village serves as both a museum within a museum and as a souvineer shop. Note the railroad siding and freight platform to the left of the store.





The Methodist church, sits at the foot of the street among the homes of the miners.



A replica of a coal breaker was constructed as a prop for the movie, The Molly Maguires. Only those parts of the structure that showed in the movie scenes were built, which left it in a half-built condition. It appeared to have not been maintained since filming ended; in 1999, when the author took these pictures, it was a dilapidated relic.



In the 1870s, when the half-mythical Molly Maguires terrorized non-Irish folk in the Anthracite Region, the Reading Coal & Iron Company and its parent Reading Railroad hauled coal to market in 4-wheeled cars called “Jimmies.” This is one of a short string of replica “Jimmies” spotted under the tippie at the Eckley breaker. It is a reasonable facsimile of cars actually used by the Reading Co. and matches the cars in the coal train blown up in the movie by the characters played by Connery and Harris.

<http://eckleyminersvillage.com/>

# Museum of Anthracite Mining & Pioneer Tunnel Mine Tour

The Anthracite Mining Museum is located in Schuylkill County's Ashland, Pennsylvania. Although it is not as large or comprehensive as the Anthracite Heritage Museum, it is an important adjunct of its larger cousin. It is located next door to the privately owned and operated Pioneer Tunnel Mine & steam train, the second of the Anthracite Region's underground mine tours. Schuylkill County was at the center of the semi-mythical "Mollie Maguire" episode in the Anthracite Region's history.



One of the displays in the museum, this is an early example of telephone communications systems that allowed underground mine officials to keep in touch with the surface.



This sign stands at the entrance to the Pioneer Tunnel Mine tour. A relic of the consolidation of the Reading Company's coal mining activities in the Schuylkill Coal Field, it came from the Locust Summit Coal Breaker, one of two massive breakers that replaced many smaller breakers throughout the field during the 1930s. The other "big" breaker, St. Nicholas, still stood when the author took this picture in 1999, although it had been shuttered since the 1960s. But it was finally dismantled in 2018.

Photography of underground scenes is extremely difficult, since the pitch-black surroundings absorb camera flashes. This scene from inside the Pioneer Tunnel shows some of the basic tools of the Anthracite coal miner.

<https://museum-of-anthracite-mining.business.site/>

<http://www.pioneertunnel.com/>

