

Steamtown National Historic Site



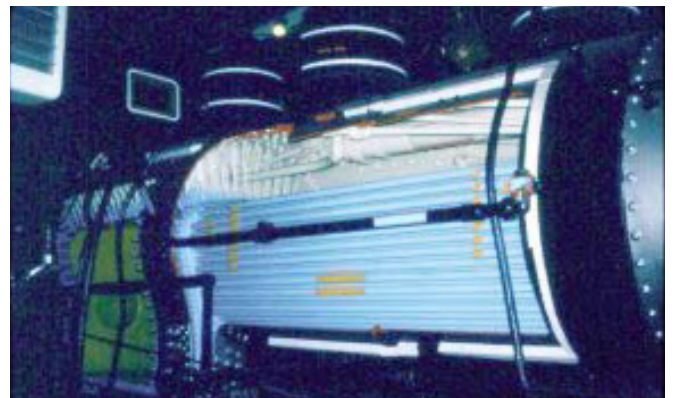
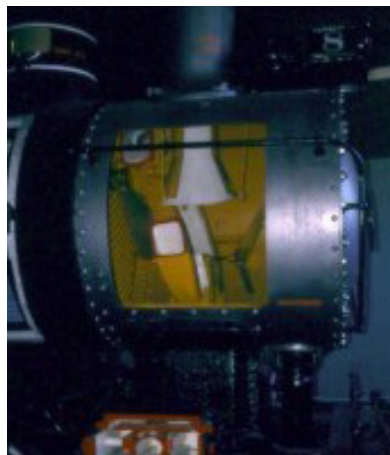
An iconic Reading Railroad Class T1 (4-8-4) sits on an outdoor display track as you enter the parking lot at Steamtown. The Reading Company was the largest owner of Anthracite coal mines in northeastern Pennsylvania, and its railroad dominated the transportation system in the region.

Despite criticism heaped on Steamtown by anti-Pork Barrel activists and some railroad history enthusiasts, the National Park Service has developed a very important contribution to the regional and national railroad history in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Created in one of the most blatant episodes of Pork Barrel politics by U.S. Representative Bill McDade, and forced on an unwilling NPS, Steamtown was a bankrupt steam tourist line with an eclectic, out-of-context collection. Located in the former “capital” of Pennsylvania’s defunct anthracite coal empire, Steamtown’s collection included precious few examples of locomotives or rolling stock from the railroads that once served the region. In fact, motive power for steam excursions was mostly from Canadian railroads. But the NPS has succeeded in transforming Steamtown into a popular, well-rounded living museum of American railroad history that preserves, among other things, many surviving pieces of equipment from the anthracite railroads. And Steamtown’s museum store contains a large selection of books and other memorabilia relating to the anthracite region’s railroad heritage.



Two anthracite railroad cabooses are displayed inside the open-air museum on tracks where a roundhouse once stood. These cars from the Lehigh & New England (left) and Delaware, Lackawanna & Western share similar characteristics.

Steamtown does a great job of teaching about steam railroad technologies. For example, the cut-away of an old 0-6-0 steam switching locomotive provides visitors with a clear idea of the inner workings of a steam engine. Other displays deal with signals and communications systems that kept trains running safely and on time.





This Wrecking Crane and Boom Car from the Central Railroad of New Jersey (CNJ) are parked near the ticket office.



The original CNJ freight station, which is on the National Register of Historic Places, stands nearby. Although long vacant, it remains in good condition and even has its own Facebook page as of 2019.



<https://www.nps.gov/stea/index.htm>