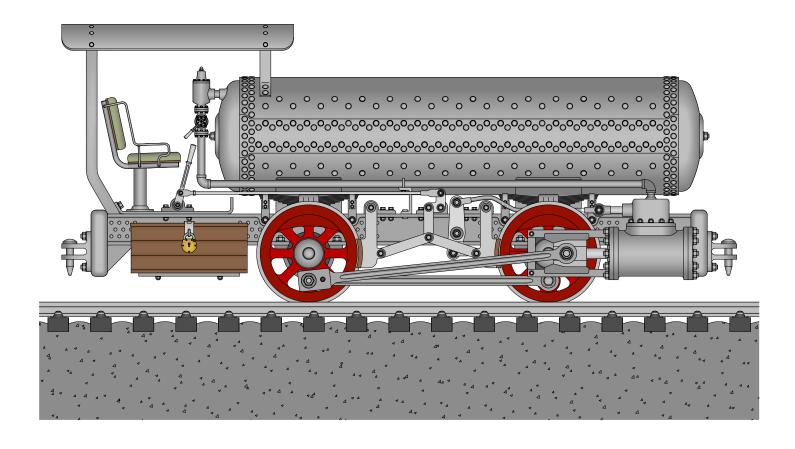
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Compressed Air Mining Locomotive

by Brian S. Elliott

Before, distributed electrical systems removing the spoils from mining operations was a difficult proposition. While the main lines were typically equipped with a traction cable system, secondary spurs were normally unpowered. Carts filled with tailings were pushed by miners or pulled by mules until the carts could be off-loaded to a cable-powered car on a main line. While these systems worked, they definitely had their restrictions. For one, the traction cable was very difficult to reroute. Secondly, there were real limits on the length of the cable systems that made them impractical for deep mines. As technology advanced, small compressed air locomotives, like the one illustrated below, were developed. These locomotives provided a great deal of flexibility as well as much higher pulling capacity. The pressure tank was typically recharged from a distributed compressed air system.



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