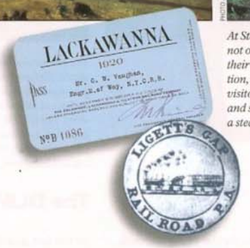
Steamtown

National Historic Site
Pennsylvania

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

The romantic image that steam railroading evokes is reflected in George Iness's painting entitled "The Lackawanna Valley" (above), showing Scranton and the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western railroad yard in 1855. Right: *a 1920 rail pass and the corporate seal of the Leggett's Gap Railroad, a forerunner of the DL&W. Note the original spelling of the rail line's name.*



At Steamtown, engineers not only help to maintain their engines in top condition, but demonstrate for visitors the knowledge and skill it took to operate a steam locomotive.

ILLUSTRATIONS: NPS/RICHARD SCHLECHT

Welcome to Steamtown

You are about to experience a part of American railroading that hasn't existed for nearly half a century—the era of the steam locomotive. Steamtown National Historic Site was established on October 30, 1986, to further public understanding and appreciation of the role steam railroading played in the development of the United States. It is the only place in the National Park System where the story of steam railroading, and the people who made it possible, is told.

Steamtown occupies about 40 acres of the Scranton railroad yard of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad, one of the earliest rail lines in northeastern Pennsylvania. At the heart of the park is the large collection of standard-gauge steam locomotives and freight and passenger cars that New England seafood processor F. Nelson Blount assembled in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1984, 17 years after Blount's untimely death, the Steamtown Foundation for the Preservation of Steam and Railroad Americana, Inc., brought the collection to Scranton, where it occupied the former DL&W yard. When Steamtown National Historic Site was created, the yard and the collection became part of the National Park System.

The Steamtown Collection consists of locomotives, freight cars, passenger cars, and maintenance-of-way equipment from several historic railroads. The locomotives range in size from a tiny industrial switcher engine built in 1937 by the H.K. Porter Company for the Bullard Company, to a huge Union Pacific Big Boy built in 1941 by the American Locomotive Company (Alco). The oldest locomotive is a freight engine built by Alco in 1903 for the Chicago Union Transfer Railway Company.

A conductor and his passengers, 1930s.

Steamtown National Historic Site preserves and interprets the legacy of steam-era railroading. Experience this era through tours of the railroad yards and the buildings. Ride in a restored railroad car or caboose. Watch Living History characters depict life in the era of steam. Lectures in the theater and the film *Steel and Steam* highlight related subjects and provide glimpses into railroading's past. We encourage you to explore and contemplate the site at your leisure.

The park includes the following points of interest, keyed to the illustration above. Other points are labeled on the illustration.

1 Visitor Center Begin your visit here for orientation to the park, its facilities, and its attractions.

2 History Museum Exhibits here highlight the people and the history of steam railroading in the United States and include displays on early railroads, life on the railroad, and the relationship between the railroad and labor, business, and government. A timeline presents key moments in the history of railroading and the DL&W from the early 19th to the mid-20th century.

3 Roundhouse This remaining portion of the 1902/1937 roundhouse has been rehabilitated and is used to store, maintain, and display engines from the Steamtown collection. A raised walkway affords opportunities to view work in progress on the locomotives.

4 Turntable This 90-foot-long turntable, used for turning engines toward the roundhouse, is the type used here after 1900.

5 1902 Roundhouse Section This three-bay portion remains from the second roundhouse, built on this site in 1902.

6 Technology Museum This museum offers a look at the technological changes and advances in railroads through the years. Included are exhibits on steam locomotive design, railroad architecture, track design and engineering, signals, communications, and railroad safety. A model of the DL&W's Scranton yard is located on the second floor.

Tours and Excursions Park rangers offer tours of the site, roundhouse, and locomotive repair shops. On certain days, rail excursions are offered, including a main line train ride to one of several destinations. Check at the visitor center for schedules. Fees are charged for visiting the site, excursions, and certain other programs.

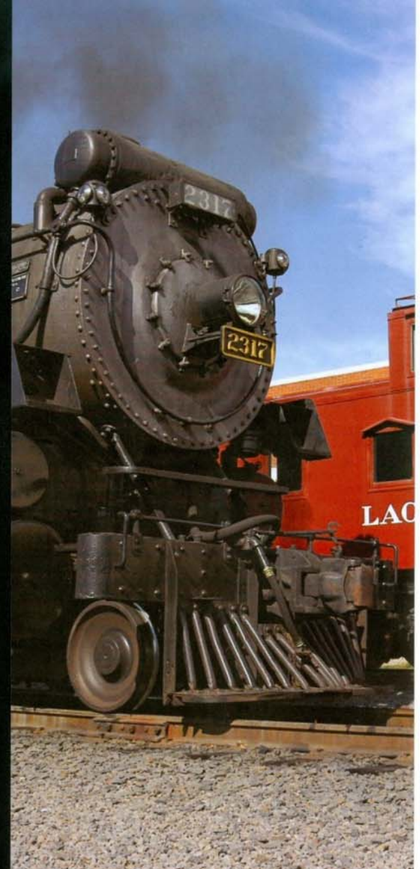
For Your Safety
Remember, Steamtown is a working railroad site, so please be careful. Look out for moving trains and other vehicles at all times. Avoid stepping on the rails and do not climb on the locomotives or cars.

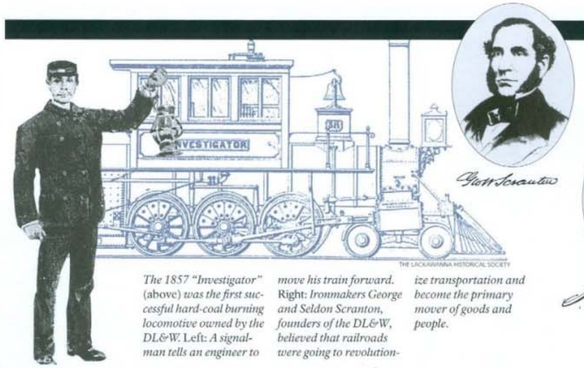
For More information
Steamtown National Historic Site
150 South Washington Avenue
Scranton, PA 18503-2018
888-693-9391
www.nps.gov/stea

Visit the National Park Service website at www.nps.gov.

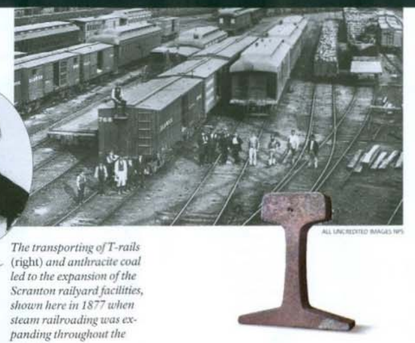
©GPO:2007 - 330-358/80019 Reprint 2007
Printed on recycled paper.

Steamtown

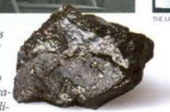




The 1857 "Investigator" (above) was the first successful hard-coal burning locomotive owned by the DL&W. Left: A signalman tells an engineer to move his train forward. Right: Ironmakers George and Selden Scranton, founders of the DL&W, believed that railroads were going to revolutionize transportation and become the primary mover of goods and people.



The transporting of T-rails (right) and anthracite coal led to the expansion of the Scranton railyard facilities, shown here in 1877 when steam railroading was expanding throughout the country.



The bituminous coal used to fuel most passenger locomotives made rail travel inherently dirty. The DL&W, however, used anthracite coal (right), which created less smoke, soot, and cinders. The fictitious traveler "Phoebe Snow" (above), whose "dress stays white from morn to night," advertised anthracite's clean-burning qualities for the DL&W.

An ad for the Dickson Manufacturing Company reminds us that Scranton was once a major locomotive builder. Right: William H. Truesdale, DL&W President, 1899–1925.

Railroads in the Age of Steam

Railroading has been called "the biggest business of 19th-century America." Animal- and gravity-powered rail transport had been used by quarry companies in Massachusetts and elsewhere in the Northeast since the early 1800s. The United States quickly adopted the steam railway once reliable locomotives suited to long-distance public transportation were available. After 1830 and the creation of better locomotive types, railroad investment in both Great Britain and the United States accelerated almost simultaneously. Britain's first true public steam railway, the Liverpool & Manchester, began operations in 1830, as did the first such American railway, the South Carolina Railroad.

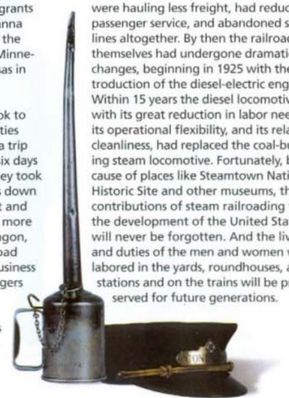
In the 1830s and '40s America's railroads were small private affairs of limited mileage, scattered along the Atlantic seaboard from Maine to Georgia, with a few enterprising companies pushing westward into the Appalachians. By 1852, thanks to merchants demanding faster and more reliable means of transporting their goods, more than 9,000 miles of track had been laid, mostly in the New England and Middle Atlantic states. During the next decade American railroads grew into a coordinated iron network of more than 30,000 miles serving all the states east of the Mississippi River.

Railroad construction slowed during the Civil War (the first American conflict in which railroads played a major role as movers of troops and supplies) but resumed on a large scale immediately afterward. By 1880 the United States had 94,000 miles of track binding the country together; 20 years later it had 193,000. By the end of World War I in 1918, the country could boast more than 254,000 miles of track and 65,000 steam locomotives.

As the railroads expanded, so did the country. Between the Civil War and World War I the United States was transformed from an agricultural to a manufacturing nation, thanks largely to the railroads. They brought raw materials like coal, oil, iron ore, and cotton to the factories and carried away steel, machines, cloth, and other finished products. They moved livestock, grain, and produce from farms to the cities. And they carried people everywhere. Most of the immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania's Lackawanna Valley traveled there by train, just like the emigrants from the East who settled Minnesota, the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Kansas in the 1870s and '80s.

The railroads shortened the time it took to travel great distances, thus bringing cities closer together. In 1812, for example, a trip from Pittsburgh to Philadelphia took six days by stagecoach. In 1854 the same journey took 15 hours by train. By 1920 the trip was down to five hours. Rail deliveries of freight and passengers were generally faster and more reliable than those by stagecoach, wagon, steamboat, or canal packet. The railroad drove many canal companies out of business and lured away most potential passengers from riverboats and stagecoach lines.

Until the end of World War I, railroads carried the bulk of all freight and passengers. After 1918 they faced increased competition from automobiles and trucks. By the 1950s railroads were hauling less freight, had reduced passenger service, and abandoned some lines altogether. By then the railroads themselves had undergone dramatic changes, beginning in 1925 with the introduction of the diesel-electric engine. Within 15 years the diesel locomotive, with its great reduction in labor needs, its operational flexibility, and its relative cleanliness, had replaced the coal-burning steam locomotive. Fortunately, because of places like Steamtown National Historic Site and other museums, the contributions of steam railroading to the development of the United States will never be forgotten. And the lives and duties of the men and women who labored in the yards, roundhouses, and stations and on the trains will be preserved for future generations.



The DL&W Railroad and the Evolution of the Railroad Yard

In the last quarter of the 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th, the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad was a major carrier of anthracite, the hard, clean-burning coal found in abundance in northeastern Pennsylvania. The popularity of anthracite not only spurred the growth and expansion of the DL&W but also the four other major railroads that ran through Scranton: the Central of New Jersey, the Delaware and Hudson, the Erie, and the New York, Ontario and Western. The Lackawanna and Wyoming Valley Railroad, an electric shortline, began operating in 1903. It served local passenger and freight needs. Coal and railroads created a huge industrial complex in the Lackawanna and Wyoming valleys. Thanks largely to William H. Truesdale, the DL&W's president from 1899 to 1925, the railroad was operated with exceptional success and efficiency for many years. Many of the structures within Steamtown National Historic Site are legacies from the Truesdale administration.

The DL&W, like other early eastern railroads, was an amalgam of smaller railroad lines combined through mergers, consolidations, and leases. It was created in 1853 by George and Seldon Scranton (for whom the city of Scranton is named), who were seeking an economical way of hauling their iron products, particularly T-rails used in the construction of railroads. The Scrantons formed the DL&W by joining three railroads—the Cayuga & Susquehanna, the Lackawanna & Western (formerly the Leggett's Gap Railroad) and the Delaware & Cobb's Gap. At its height the DL&W operated on about 1,000 miles of mainline and branch track between Hoboken, N.J., and Buffalo, N.Y.

Northeastern Pennsylvania was a "melting pot" for immigrants who chose the Lackawanna and Wyoming valleys as the place to make a better life for themselves and their families. Those who settled in the Scranton area—some 30 ethnic groups—sought employment in silk mills, iron and steel factories, coal mines, and with railroads. At its peak the railroad yard employed several thousand workers, mostly immigrants and the sons and grandsons of immigrants, who came to the United States during the last half of the 19th century. The Scranton railroad yard, now the home of Steamtown National Historic Site, is representative of 20th-century steam-era facilities that were used for the handling of coal, freight, and passenger traffic and the service and repair of locomotives.

Scranton's economic fortunes followed those of the DL&W and began to decline in the mid-1920s when the demand for anthracite coal started to subside. By the 1930s and 1940s gas and oil were replacing coal as a home and industrial fuel. The DL&W began using diesel locomotives, reducing the need for coal even further. The steam locomotive repair shop in Scranton closed in 1949. Many functions of the yard were shut down in the 1960s after the DL&W merged with its longtime rival, the Erie Railroad, to become the Erie-Lackawanna. The yard was finally closed by Conrail in 1980, following its 1976 acquisition of the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad. Steam-era functions have been restored to allow National Park Service staff to show how it was when railroads ran on steam.

1804
Richard Trevithick builds a successful steam locomotive in Great Britain.

1829
D&H Canal Company Railroad tests the "Stourbridge Lion," the first real steam locomotive in the United States.

1849–53
Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad is formed by combining the Cayuga & Susquehanna, the Lackawanna & Western, and the Delaware & Cobb's Gap railroads.

1869
The transcontinental railroad is completed between Omaha, Nebraska, and Sacramento, California.

1904
"Phoebe Snow" first promotes travel on DL&W Railroad.

1949
The diesel-powered luxury train *Phoebe Snow* is introduced. Scranton locomotive shops close.

1960
DL&W and the Erie railroads merge to form the Erie-Lackawanna Railroad. M.G. McInnis of the Erie becomes president.

1976
Consolidated Rail Corporation (Conrail) is formed from the merging of numerous railroads, including the Erie-Lackawanna.

1986
Congress establishes Steamtown National Historic Site.

1995
Restored and recreated roundhouse and museum complex opens to visitors.