



CUMBERLAND VALLEY RAILROAD MUSEUM



B & O Coal Hopper

This Baltimore and Ohio Railroad coal hopper is a model W-2A and is the only known survivor of a car that once dominated North America. The car was salvaged from a train wreck that occurred in the 1950s near Sykesville, PA.

Moving Coal

The metal sheathing attached to the outside of the framing provided the W-2 hopper with increased carrying capacity and its dump bays allowed the car to easily offload its cargo. By the 1920s, most railroads had shifted to wrought (or wrot) steel wheels, which were created through a complex process of pressing, forging and re-forging a steel ingot. The handbrake on this car is clearly visible on the south end and you can also see multiple elements of the Westinghouse airbrake system, including the angle cock, valve and reservoir tank.



Shipment of coal moving through Shippensburg, Aug. 29, 1926



Powering a University

In 1898 the Cumberland Valley State Normal School built a new steam plant adjacent to the Cumberland Valley Railroad where a ready supply of coal could be delivered using hoppers like the one on display. You can see the original facility under construction in the museum's large mural. The building is now home to Shippensburg University's School of Engineering.

Reclaiming History

After the wreck, the hopper lay derelict for at least thirty years before B&O enthusiast Randy Anderson decided to salvage it. The complete restoration of the car took place in 2017 and included the welding of new steel on the upper portions. In September 2018, the Franklin County Commissioners donated the hopper and Dave Burkholder moved it to its permanent home here at Shippensburg Station.



Interior of the Shippensburg State College steam plant, May 1953.

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Sign designed by Ashley Walton Designs