



The Monongahela and Duquesne Inclines in History

The Monongahela and Duquesne inclines are the oldest of the few remaining inclines in the United States. While providing marvelous views of Pittsburgh cityscapes to sightseers, they continue to perform the function they were originally designed for, moving people from their homes to their destinations every day.

By 1860, Pittsburgh was a rapidly expanding industrial city with most of its factories and mills located along the river flats. In a time when most people walked to work, homes quickly filled in the areas surrounding these industries and the need for additional housing within a short distance of their work caused people to begin living atop nearby Mount Washington. Steep paths were the only quick means of travel between the mountain's top and the river flats below. Despite plenty of available land for housing, development of Mount Washington lagged due to a lack of good roads and public transportation until the predominantly German immigrants of "Coal Hill" as Mount Washington was then known, proposed the construction of several inclines similar to ones already operating in their native land.

The Monongahela Incline was built at a cost of \$50,000 and opened on May 28, 1870. A quarter-century before electric streetcars would revolutionize transportation, the Mon Incline "opened up" Mount Washington to robust development, enabling people to live 600 feet above the city and still have easy access to the factories and businesses spread out along the Monongahela River as well as to Downtown Pittsburgh. Its success brought about the construction of 17 other area inclines including a second parallel Monongahela Incline built for freight traffic in 1884. Originally transporting horse-drawn wagons, it survived long enough to carry automobiles. It was dismantled in 1935 after the construction of McArde Roadway and other roads and the use of trucks rendered it obsolete.

Beginning with the initiation of electric streetcar service before WWI and continuing after the opening of the Liberty Bridge and Tunnel and McArde Roadway in the mid-1920's, Mon Incline ridership dropped to an all-time low. While dismantling its freight incline, the Monongahela Inclined Plane Company fortunately decided to improve the passenger incline. In 1935, they rebuilt the cars and replaced the steam engines that had pulled the cables with electricmotors.

The Monongahela Incline was consolidated into Port Authority of Allegheny County transit operations in 1964. In 1970, it was declared a historic structure by the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation and was later registered as a National Historic Landmark. Since then, it has been renovated several times. While the stations have been restored to their original appearance, the propulsion and braking systems have been updated and one of the cars has been modified to accommodate wheelchairs.

Spreading development throughout Mount Washington brought about the construction of the Duquesne Incline in May 1877. Pittsburgh's second passenger incline connected Duquesne Heights residents with the mills and factories along West Carson Street and Downtown via the Point Bridge. Not as well located as the Monongahela Incline, business began to ebb as first streetcars and later automobiles syphoned traffic away. By 1962, low ridership and the need to rebuild the structure caused the private company which operated it to seriously consider its closure. A group of Duquesne Heights residents rescued it after raising funds and assumed its operations as the non-profit Society for the Preservation of the Duquesne Incline. Over the years, volunteers have restored the stations and cars to their original splendor, overhauled the structure and hoisting machinery and developed plans to rebuild the stations. The original cars still retain their handcarved cherry panels, maple trim, amber glass transoms and original hardware.

GETTING TO THE INCLINES BY BUS OR RAIL

Monongahela Incline by Bus

The Monongahela Incline may be easily reached by bus from Downtown Pittsburgh by boarding any **41 or 46 series bus, 51A or 51C** at stops along Wood or Smithfield streets. Exit the bus at the first stop after crossing the Smithfield Street Bridge.

Downtown Bus Stops for all buses to the Monongahela Incline

Wood Street	past Third Avenue btw Forbes & Fifth aves at Sixth Avenue
Sixth Avenue	at Smithfield Street
Smithfield Street	at Fifth Avenue at Forbes Avenue at Third Avenue at Fort Pitt Boulevard

Duquesne Incline by Bus

The Duquesne Incline is located on West Carson Street just past the Fort Pitt Bridge. Routes **33X** and **100** operate between Downtown and the Duquesne Incline.

Downtown Bus Stops for 33X and 100 buses to the Duquesne Incline

Seventh Avenue	at Smithfield Street
Liberty Avenue	at Tito Way at Fifth Avenue at Hilton Hotel

Monongahela Incline by Rail

The Monongahela Incline is located on West Carson Street across from Station Square. Take the **42C, 42S, 47L or 47S "T"** from any of the Downtown subway stations and exit at Station Square. The Incline is located a short distance away from the "T" station.

Downtown Subway Stations

Gateway Center

Stanwix Street at Liberty Avenue

Note: This station is closed due to North Shore Connector construction. All rail service will terminate at Wood Street Station.

Wood Street Station

Liberty Avenue at Wood Street

Steel Plaza

Sixth Avenue at Ross Street *or*
Grant Street opposite Oliver Avenue

First Avenue Station

First Avenue near the PNC Firstside Center

Bikes on the Monongahela Incline

Bikes are permitted on the Incline seven days a week at any time without restriction.

Bikes may only be stowed in the upper level of the wheelchair accessible car. Only one bike is permitted at a time.

INCLINE FACTS

Monongahela Incline

Length	635 Feet
Elevation	367.39 Feet
Grade	35 degrees, 35 minutes
Speed	6 miles per hour
Passenger Capacity	24 for the east car 23 for the west car (accessible car)
Opened	May 28, 1870
Renovated	- 1882 (with steel structure) - 1935 (electrial equipment replaced steam engines) - 1982-83 (structure and lower station and cars rehabilitated) - 1994 (upper station restored, electrial, motor and braking systems rebuilt, cars made wheelchair accessible)

Duquesne Incline

Length	800 Feet
Elevation	400 Feet
Grade	30 degrees
Speed	6 miles per hour
Passenger Capacity	17 per car
Opened	May 20, 1877
Renovated	- 1888 (completely rebuilt with an all steel structure) - circa 1900 (a new lower station is constructed) - 1932 (electrical equipment is replaced with steam engines)
Closed	1962 by the private operating company
Reopened	1963 - reopened and since operated by the Society for the Preservation of the Duquesne Incline

Light type indicates AM times. **Bold type indicates PM times.**

