Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn Village

These are snapshots of the actual early steam engines located in the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, MI. http://www.hfmgv.org/museum/default.asp

The Museum’s web site is building out to include information on the industrial items in their collection. (3/3/07)
Watt Canal Pumping Engine, 1796

James Watt’s improved engine used just half the fuel of its predecessor, the Newcomen engine. This fuel saving was made possible by the use of Watt’s patented invention, the separate condenser. But there was a hitch: Watt demanded costly royalties for the use of his engines. Many engine owners chose to keep their more wasteful machines until Watt’s patents expired.

Newcomen Engine, about 1760

This is the oldest surviving steam engine in the world. It was used to pump water out of a deep mine in England. Thomas Newcomen designed the first truly successful steam engine around 1710. Newcomen engines were popular because for the first time mine owners had a pump that could be used anywhere.
Watt Rotative Steam Engine, 1788

This is a full-scale replica of the first practical factory steam engine. The big toothed gear transferred the engine's up-and-down motion to a rotary motion for running machinery. British inventor James Watt designed this engine in the 1780s. His business partner, Matthew Boulton, encouraged him. By 1800, two-thirds of Boulton & Watt engines were being sold to factory owners.

The First Modern Power Source

Inventors often have no idea how their creations will be adapted and used. The practical steam engine was invented around 1750 to solve a specific problem: pumping water out of deep mines. Before long, it was being used to supply water to canals and cities. By the 1780s, it was powering factories.