Robert Allison (1827-1916) was a prominent figure in the many technological developments in the early history of anthracite mining. When he was a young man, the Anthracite Industry was experiencing an explosive growth. With this growth, new technology was needed. New machinery was the answer, and Allison was one of the people that helped supply it. Allison assisted in the erection of the Bast coal breaker, the first ever erected. He also worked as one of the workmen to help roll the first T-rail ever rolled in this country, in Danville PA.
The Franklin Iron Works produced mining machinery used in Anthracite and around the world.

He was the first private citizen in the U.S. to buy an automobile.
After reading an ad for a Winton Automobile, the first automobile ad published in the U.S., he went to Cleveland and bought the first Winton car produced.
The car is now in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution.