

COAL MINING & COAL COMPANY STORE SCRIP



\$1.00

\$.50

\$.25

\$.10

\$.05

\$.01

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Song – “16 Tons” (1947 & 1955)

Song – “Big Bad John” (1961)

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Song – “John Henry”

Movie – “Molly MaGuire” (1970)

Movie – “Matewan” (1987)

OVERVIEW

Coal and Coal Mining (underground mining and strip mining) have been and remain an important part of the U.S. energy equation which includes – coal, oil, natural gas, nuclear and renewables (wind, solar, etc.). Currently, 65% of electricity is generated from fossil fuels – 25% coal and 40% natural gas. If you own an electric car and plug it in to be recharged, two thirds of the electricity will come from fossil fuels.

PURPOSE

What is the purpose of this document?

COAL MINING – To shed light on coal mining and coal miners. Particularly in the old days, underground coal mining was physically hard, dirty and dangerous work. It is and has been important to the growth and success of this country.

SCRIP TOKENS – To shed light on Scrip (coal and timber) and how and where to buy them. Collecting coins is a popular hobby. Collecting coal mine scrip is another form of collecting coins and is an important part of our history.

There are many pieces of information on these subjects out there from tours, internet, books, publications, etc. This document is an attempt to pull them all together into a concise and organized presentation – including many pictures.

CONTACT

DOCUMENT - This document was compiled by **Bob Hampton**. An important contributor was John Bridges. To obtain a free copy email – **rhamptonlrg(at)aol.com**. For those with knowledge and information on these subjects, your input would very much be appreciated.

AUTHOR – Bob Hampton is a long-time collector of coal mine memorabilia - including coal mine scrip tokens. He and his family own a farm in Sandstone, West Virginia, in the heart of coal mining country. He has met and gotten to know many previous and current coal miners and has a great appreciation and respect for them and their families. The work they are and have performed is physically hard, dirty and dangerous. Everyone should visit and tour an exhibition coal mine to gain an understanding and appreciation of what coal miners do.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ's) ABOUT COAL SCRIP

What is coal mine scrip? In the old days coal miners were most often paid with scrip and not U.S. currency. They were paid monthly based on the weight of coal the miner blasted, dug and loaded onto carts during the month. They were not paid by the hour. They could work any days and as long as they wanted to.

During the month if the miner needed additional money, they could request an advance of scrip for the amount of coal they had loaded earlier in the month, for which they had not been paid. This led to the tendency of miners constantly being in debt to the mine company. New miners were often not paid until two or three months after they started work.

In the early days, Scrip was known by many other names including – Trade Tokens, Flickers, Secos, Clackers, Checks, P'Lollys, Good Fors, Lightweight, Bingles, Stickrs, Chink-tins and Dugaloo. Almost all company stores used scrip as change to insure the customer would come back to spend it.

What does scrip look like? The original scrip was in the form of paper. This was replaced by thin metal coins similar in size to its counterpart in U.S. currency. The metal was brass, bronze, copper, aluminum, zinc, nickel, nickel plate and bi-metal. There were a few tokens made of a hard fiber, and even hard rubber or wood. Scrip was usually denominated in the same values as U.S. currency. The largest tokens were most frequently \$1.00 face value. Although pieces with a higher face value such as \$5.00 are common. Most tokens were round, but others were oval, octagonal, hexagonal, scalloped edge, square, etc.

There is often a cutout in a token which is unique to the mine store location where it could be used. This helped the store clerks to easily ensure that it could be used at their company store. In most cases, the tokens could not be used at any other company store.

Where was it made and distributed from? There were a number of scrip manufacturers. However, the Osborne Register Company (ORCO) in Cincinnati, Ohio became the principal manufacturer and distributor (and later renamed Osborne Coinage Company). Ingle-Schierloh of Dayton, Ohio was one of the major early makers before ORCO became dominant.

Was scrip used in other industries? Scrip was also often used in the timber industry, iron mines, cotton mills, etc. Many mine owners also owned the timber on their mine properties which was cut.

When and why did it get started? The use of metal scrip token began in the early 1900's. There were a variety of reasons.

- (1) Demand – Major increase in demand for coal by industry in the early 1900's.
- (2) Mines – Miners were often in remote and inaccessible locations and had only one store owned by the company.
- (3) Currency – U.S. currency was scarce.
- (4) Companies – Companies could supply the miners and make more money from captive miners from the markup on store merchandise.

In what areas of the U.S. was it used? It was used anywhere there were underground coal mines. However, it is estimated that 75 percent of all scrip used was by coal companies in West Virginia, Virginia and Eastern Kentucky.

When and why was it phased out? The use of coal scrip ended in the mid-1950's, with a few coal companies still using it in the 1960's. There were a variety of reasons –

- (1) Currency - U.S. currency had become more plentiful.
- (2) Miners - Miners wanted to be able to also shop in non-company stores.
- (3) Credit – Other forms of credit became more readily available.
- (4) Transportation – Mines were more accessible by car.
- (5) Vending – The one cent of scrip was often the same size as the U.S. dime and was being used in vending machines.
- (6) Law – In the 1950's many states began to outlaw the use of scrip as a method to pay wages. In 1967, it was outlawed by the U.S. Congress.

What is it worth today? Like any numismatic, the value of a coin is based on the number produced, its condition and historical value, and its availability. The Edkins Catalogue of United States Coal Company Scrip includes an Edkins rarity rating to help. There are two volumes available from the National Scrip Collectors Association, Volume I contains all states except West Virginia, and Volume II contains only West Virginia. No dollar values are listed in the latest editions, but a rarity rating from R1 to R10 is assigned to the tokens, with R1 being the most common and R10 being the rarest. The catalogues also list details such as size diameters, shapes, etc.

Where can you buy Scrip? Example sources include – eBay, Etsy and the NSCA (National Scrip Collectors Association, www.nationalscripcollectorsassociation.org) newsletter and semi-annual meetings, one of which is in West Virginia. Coal scrip tokens are extremely collectible as it is estimated that as many as 10,000 varieties exist, many still available at an affordable price.

OSBORNE COINAGE COMPANY, CINCINNATI, OH



Osborne Coinage Company, Cincinnati, OH. Located at 2851 Massachusetts Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45225, Phone 877-480-0456, Website www.osbornecoin.com.

Description. Today, the company advertises as “America’s Oldest Private Mint”.

- (1) In 1899, the Childs Company, Chicago, IL was the first to apply for a patent of its token design or system.
- (2) In 1909, the Ingle Company received a similar patent.
- (3) In 1919, the Insurance Credit System followed. Other early coal scrip makers were
- (4) Wright & Sons, Cincinnati, OH,
- (5) Southern Rubber Stamp Works, and
- (6) Richmond, VA, S.H. Quints & Sons, Philadelphia, PA,
- (7) Murdock Stamp & Specialty Company. The Ingle Company later became
- (8) Ingle Schierloh Company, Dayton, OH.
- (9) In 1920 Wiley Osborne purchased the Murdock Stamp and Specialty Company and in 1924, the Insurance Credit System and changed the name to the
- (10) Osborne Register Company with the trade mark of “ORCO”. After Ingle Schierloh Company ceased operations, **ORCO became the “KING” of the scrip token business.**
- In 1944, Osborne sold the company to the
- (11) Dayton Acme Company, which later named it the
- (12) Osborne Coinage Company.

BOOKS, PUBLICATIONS & WEBSITES

BOOKS

Edkins Catalogue of United States of Coal Company Store Scrip – Volumes I (2014) & II (2015) – NSCA – Garrett Salyers & Mike Williams.

Catalogue of Lumber Company Store Tokens – NSCA.

Explosive Control Tokens – NSCA – David Shenkman.

The System Scrip Makers of Western Ohio – Eric Schema & David Shenkman.

Scrip: Trade Tokens Issued by United States Coal Mining Companies & Company Stores (1978) – Stuart E. Brown.

20,000 Coal Company Stores (1971) – Gordon Dodrill.

PUBLICATIONS

Quarterly Newsletter – NSCA

WEBSITES

www.nationalscripcollectors.org

www.coincollectorguide.com/scrip-coal-company-token

www.appalachianhistory.net

www.wbcc-online.com/tokens/us_tokens/uscoal.htm

www.nps.gov/biso/learn/historyculture/scrip.htm

www.numismaticnews.net/community/why-i-collect-west-virginia-scrip

SCRIP VENDORS

ASSOCIATIONS

National Script Collectors Association (NSCA).

Spring meeting in West Virginia and a fall meeting elsewhere in Southern Appalachia.
Quarterly newsletter title – “Scrip Talk”.

SELLERS

NSCA – Newsletter and vendors and collectors at NSCA semi-annual meetings.

eBay – Sellers advertising on eBay.

Etsy - www.etsy.com/market/coal_scrip

NEW RIVER COMPANY, WV



New River Company, WV (1917). Located at 411 Main Street, Mount Hope, WV 28880. The front of the building is shown in the picture above.

Description. The New River Coalfield is high quality (smokeless) bituminous coal located in northeastern Raleigh County and southern Fayette County, West Virginia. The seams of coal include Sewell, Fire Creek, and Beckley. Commercial mining began there in the 1870's when the C&O (Chesapeake & Ohio) railroad line was completed in the New River Gorge. Rail yards were maintained at Quinnimont, Raleigh, and Thurmond, WV. Companies such as the New River Company, New River & Pocahontas Consolidated Coal Co., and Mary Frances Coal Co. were the largest operators in the New River Coalfield. The structures behind the New River Company headquarters were their repair shops and warehouses.

The mines began to close down after World War II and today there are very few active coal mines in the field. The mines owned and/or managed by the New River Company (in alphabetic order) included – (1) Carlisle, (2) Cranberry, (3) Glen Jean, (4) Harvey, (5) Kilsyth, (6) Lohgelly, (7) Mabscott, (8) Mount Hope, (9) Oswald, (10) Price Hill, (11) Prudence, (12) Scarbro, (13) Skelton, (14) Sprague, (15) Stanaford, (16) Summerlee, (17) Whipple, (18) Wickham. Also Siltix.

LIST OF EXHIBITION COAL MINES

PENNSYLVANIA

Lackawanna Exhibition Coal Mine and Museum, Scranton (1860-1966). Located at Bald Mountain Road, Scranton, PA 18504, 4 road miles west of downtown Scranton, PA, Phone 800-238-7245, Website www.lackawannacounty.org.

No. 9 Exhibition Coal Mine and Museum, Lansford, PA (1855-1972). Located at 9 Dock Street, Lansford, PA 18232, 15 road miles south of Hazelton, Phone 570) 645-7074, Website www.poconomountains.com.

Tour-Ed Exhibition Coal Mine and Museum, Tarentum, PA (1850-1968). Located at 748 Bull Creek Road #3004, Tarentum, PA 15084, 20 road miles northwest of downtown Pittsburgh, Phone 724-224-4720, Website www.tour-edmine.com.

WEST VIRGINIA

Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine and Museum, Beckley, WV (1889-1953). Located at 513 Ewart Avenue, Beckley, WV 25801, Phone 304-256-1747, Website www.becklyemine.com.

VIRGINIA

Pocahontas Exhibition Coal Mine and Museum (1882-1955). Located at 215 Shop Hollow Road, State Route 659, Pocahontas, VA 24635, 55 road miles southwest of Beckley, WV, and 15 miles northwest of Bluefield, Phone 276-945-2134, Website pocahontasva.org.

KENTUCKY

Portal 31 Exhibition Coal Mine and Lamphouse Museum, Lynch, KY (1920-1963). Located at 100 Church Street, Lynch, KY 40855, 4 road miles east of Cumberland and Cumberland Gap, KY, Phone 606) 848-3131, Website www.portal31.org.

Barthell Coal Company Store, Strunk, KY (1910-1952). Located at 552 Barthell Rod, Strunk, KY 42649, near the border with Tennessee, 120 road miles south of Lexington, Phone 888-550-5748, Website www.barthellcoalcamp.com. Now is part of an open-air history museum.

TOWNS

Eckley Miners' Village, Weatherly, PA (1853-Present). Located at 2 Eckley Main Street, Weatherly, PA 18255, 8 miles northeast of Hazelton, Phone 570-636-2070, Website www.eckleyminersvillage.com.

Town of Bramwell, WV (1888). Located on the Bluestone River, 50 road miles south of Beckley, WV and 10 miles northwest of Bluefield, WV, Websites www.bramwellwv.com and www.blueridgecounlry.com.

**LACKAWANNA EXHIBITION COAL MINE
AND MUSEUM, SCRANTON (1860-1966)**



Lackawanna Exhibition Coal Mine and Museum, Scranton (1860-1966). Located at Bald Mountain Road, Scranton, PA 18504, in eastern Pennsylvania, 4 road miles from downtown Scranton, Phone 800-238-7245, Website www.lackawannacounty.org. The mine tour train is shown in the picture above.

Description. The Lackawanna Exhibition Coal Mine is a retired anthracite coal mine which was an operating mine from 1860 to 1966, 106 years. The word “Lackawanna” comes from an Indian word which means “stream that forks”. Anthracite coal is known for its sheen, high carbon content and few impurities. It is rare and highly sought after. Tours of the mine are conducted on mine trains by retired Anthracite coal miners. Tours include stops and briefings on the history of coal mining in the tunnels along seams of coal (Clark and Dunmore #1 and #2).

Pa Museum. The Pennsylvania Anthracite Heritage Museum is also located on the site – at 22 Bald Road, Phone 570-963-4804, Website www.anthracitemuseum.org.

Note - Coal is classified into four main types – (1) anthracite, (2) bituminous, (3) subbituminous, (4) lignite. The ranking depends on the types and amounts of carbon the coal contains and on the amount of heat energy the coal can produce.

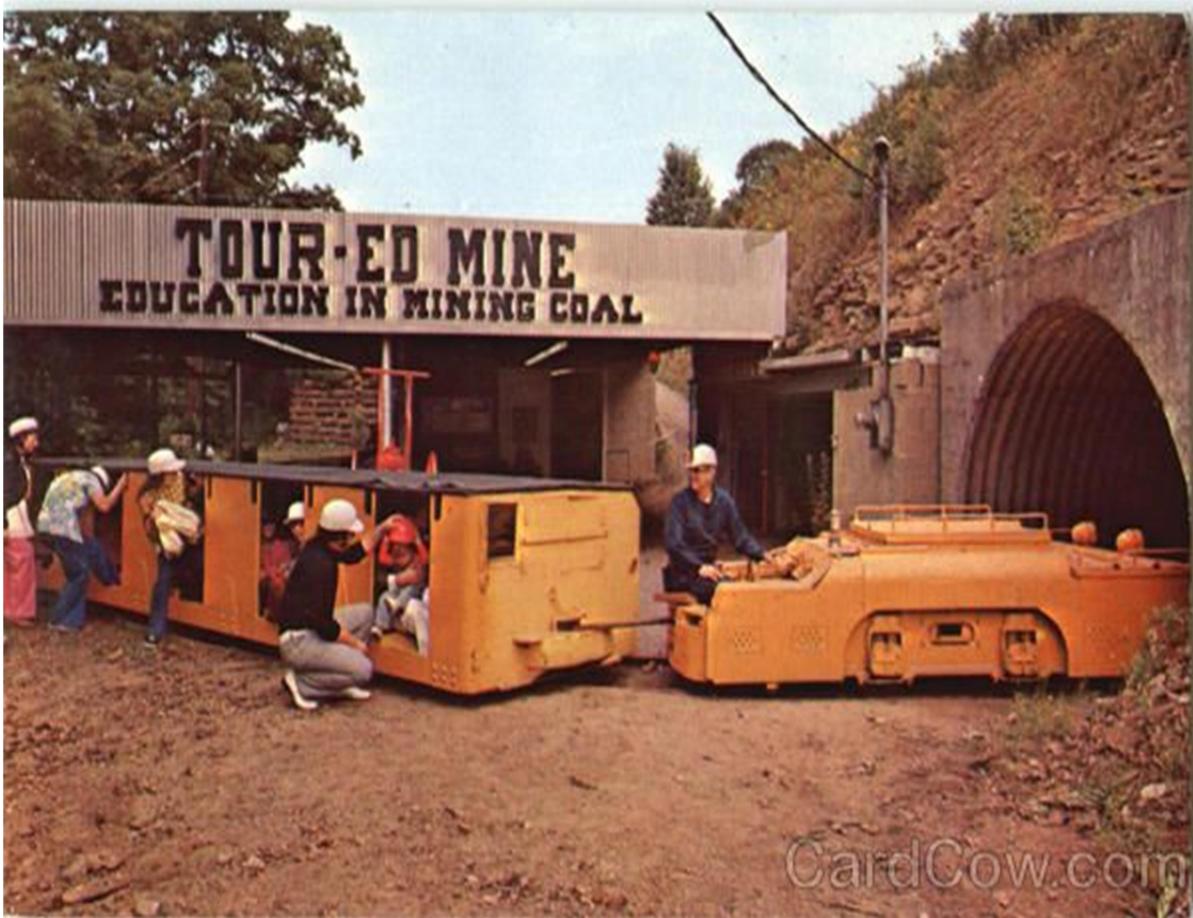
**NO. 9 EXHIBITION COAL MINE
AND MUSEUM, LANSFORD, PA (1855-1972)**



No. 9 Exhibition Coal Mine and Museum, Lansford, PA (1855-1972). Located at 9 Dock Street, Lansford, PA 18232, in central Pennsylvania, 15 road miles south of Hazelton, Phone 570) 645-7074, Website www.poconomountains.com. The mine tour train at the main entrance to the mine is shown in the picture above.

Description. The No. 9 Exhibition Coal Mine and Museum is a retired anthracite coal mine which was an operating mine from 1855 to 1972, 117 years. Tours of the mine are conducted on mine trains by retired anthracite coal miners. Tours include a 1,600 foot train ride into the mine in the tunnel along the coal seam (Mammoth seam) and 600 foot guided walking tour on the history of coal mining, including the mine's original elevator shaft. Outside attractions include - the museum, housed in the original wash shanty.

**TOUR-ED EXHIBITION COAL MINE
AND MUSEUM, TARENTUM, PA (1850-1968)**



Tour-Ed Exhibition Coal Mine and Museum, Tarentum, PA (1850-1968). Located at 748 Bull Creek Road #3004, Tarentum, PA 15084, in western Pennsylvania, 20 road miles northwest of downtown Pittsburgh, Phone 724-224-4720, Website www.tour-edmine.com. The mine tour train at the main entrance to the mine is shown in the picture above.

Description. The Tour-Ed Exhibition Coal Mine is a retired coal mine which was an operating mine from 1850 to 1968, 118 years. Tours of the mine are conducted on mine trains by retired coal miners. Tours include stops and briefings on the history of mining in the tunnels along seams of coal.

**BECKLEY EXHIBITION COAL MINE
AND MUSEUM, BECKLEY, WV (1889-1953)**



Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine and Museum, Beckley, WV (1889-1953). Located at 513 Ewart Avenue, Beckley, WV 25801, Phone 304-256-1747, Website www.beckleymine.com. The mine tour train is shown in the picture above.

Description. The Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine is a retired bituminous coal mine which was an operating mine from 1889 to 1953, 64 years. The coal seam is in the range of 3 feet high. The town of Beckley was name for James Beckley. Tours of the mine are conducted on original mine trains by retired bituminous coal miners. Tours include stops and briefings on the history of coal mining in the tunnels along the coal seams. Other attractions include buildings disassembled at other coal camps, brought to the Beckley site and reassembled. They include – New Visitor Center, Museum and Gift Shop, Coal Company House, Mine Superintendent’s House, Pemberton Coal Camp Church, Helen Coal Camp School.

**POCAHONTAS EXHIBITION COAL
MINE AND MUSEUM (1882-1955)**



Pocahontas Exhibition Coal Mine and Museum (1882-1955). Located at 215 Shop Hollow Road, State Route 659, Pocahontas, VA 24635, 55 road miles southwest of Beckley, WV and 15 miles northwest of Bluefield, Phone 276-945-2134, Website pocahontasva.org. The entrance to the mine is shown in the picture above.

Description. The Pocahontas Exhibition Coal Mine and Museum is a retired sub-bituminous coal mine which was an operating mine from 1882 to 1955, 73 years. It has a wide incoal seam (Pocahontas #3 seam) which ranges between 10 and 12 feet. The coal from the mine was used to fuel U.S. Navy ships during World War I and II, because of its smokeless nature. Guided walking tours and briefings on the history of coal mining are conducted by retired bituminous coal miners.

PORTAL 31 COAL MINE
AND MUSEUM, LYNCH, KY (1920-1963)



Portal 31 Exhibition Coal Mine and Museum, Lynch, KY (1920-1963). Located at 100 Church Street, Lynch, KY 40855, 5 road miles east of Cumberland and Cumberland Gap, KY, Phone 606-848-3131, Website www.portal31.org. The mine tour train at the main entrance to the mine is shown in the picture above.

Description. The Portal Thirty-One Exhibition Coal Mine and Museum is a retired bituminous coal mine which was an operating mine from 1920 to 1963, 43 years. The mine and town of Lynch were built by U.S. Steel and all of its production was sent to U.S. Steel manufacturing plants. At one point, Lynch was the world's largest coal camp. Tours of the mine are conducted on mine trains by retired coal miners. Tours include stops and briefings on the history of coal mining in the tunnels along 50 to 56 inch high seams of coal (Elkhorn, Keokee, Kelioka). Other attractions on the site include – Lamphouse Museum, Bathhouse, L&N (Louisville & Nashville) Train Depot.

KY Museum. The Kentucky Coal Museum. Located at 231 Main Street, Benham, KY 40807, 2 miles west of Lynch, Phone 606-848-1530, Website www.kycoalmuseum.southeast.kctcs.edu/. It is housed in a former company store that was built by International Harvester in 1923.

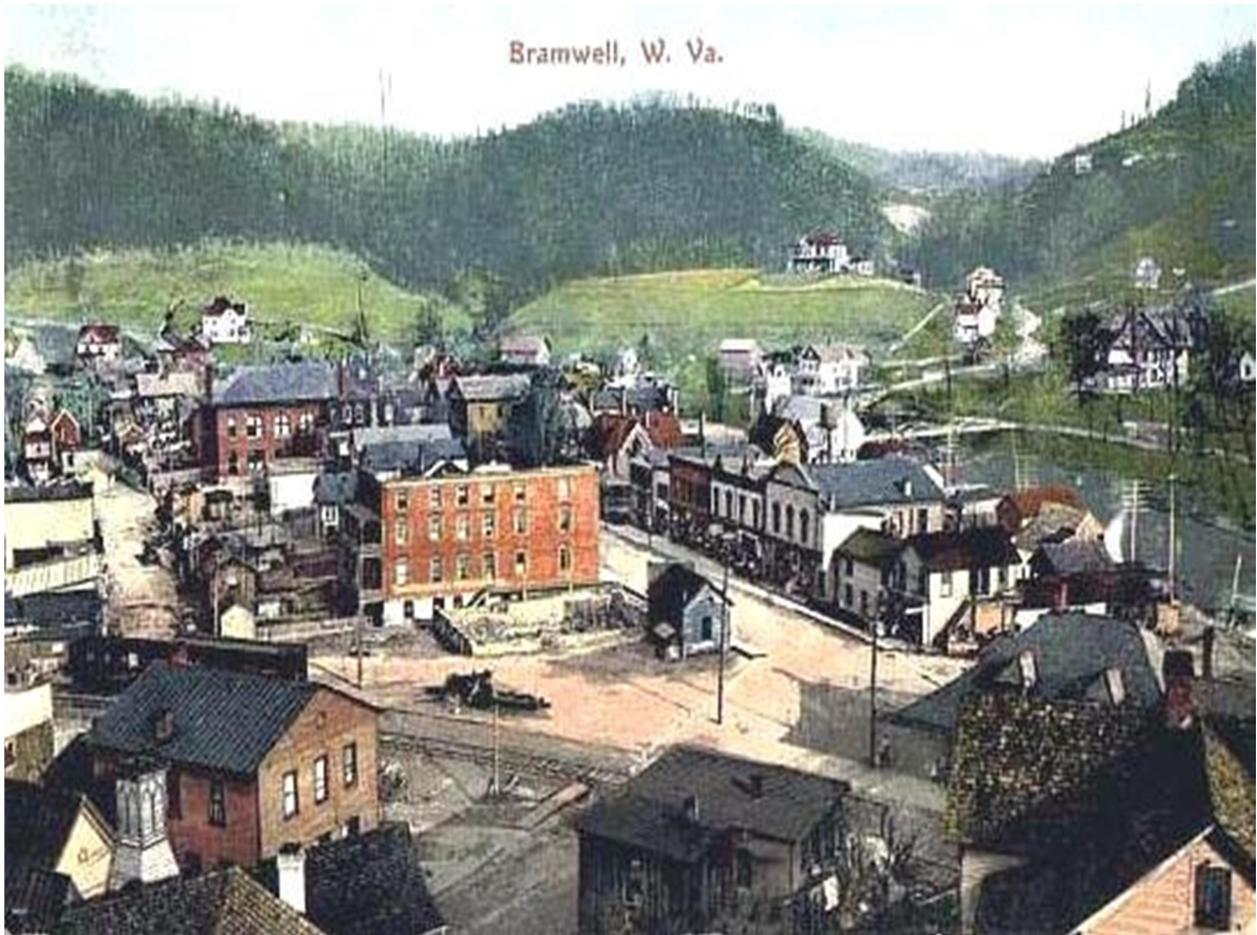
ECKLEY MINERS' VILLAGE MUSEUM, WEATHERLY, PA (1853)



Eckley Miners' Village Museum, Weatherly, PA (1853-Present). Located at 2 Eckley Main Street, Weatherly, PA 18255, in eastern Pennsylvania, 8 road miles northeast of Hazelton, Phone 570-636-2070, Website www.eckleyminersvillage.com. A view of the village's main street is shown in the picture above.

Description. The Eckley Miners' Village Museum is a historic and restored anthracite coal mining patch town. It is named for Eckley Coxe. Coal mining began in the area in 1853. The movie "The Molly Maguires" released in 1970 was filmed in Eckley and as a result, saved it from demolition. Attractions include the – Visitors' Center (1975), Immaculate Conception Church (1861), Sports and Social Club (1946), Slate Picker's House (1854), Laborer's Dwelling (1854), Company Store (1968), St. James Episcopal Church (1859), Coal Breaker.

TOWN OF BRAMWELL, WV (1888)



Town of Bramwell, WV (1888). Located on the Bluestone River, 50 road miles south of Beckley, WV and 10 miles northwest of Bluefield, WV, Websites www.bramwellwv.com and www.blueridgecountry.com. A view of the town is shown in the picture above.

Description. Founded in 1888, Bramwell was at the center of the Pocohontas Coalfields and 19 coal barons (owners and operators) built large Victorian homes there – many of which exist today. In the late 1800's, the town was known for having the largest number of millionaires per capita in the United States. There were four nearby major mines which included - Mill Creek, Buckeye, Booth Bowen and Caswell Creek. Miners received \$1.05 for a coal car that held 2 1/2 tons. A strong, efficient worker could load 4 1/2 cars in a day. Accidents were common. Sites to see in Bramwell include – Homes on Millionaire Row, Bramwell Depot, Presbyterian Church, Bank, Drug Store, Coal Heritage Interpretive Center.

REMAINING COAL COMPANY STORES

Introduction. The coal company store served as the store and social center of the coal camp community. The stores were built big because they provided everything the miners and their families would need – from essential food items to the supplies the miners needed to work. They had other community services such as post office, telephone exchange, etc. There was no competition as most mines paid workers in scrip which could only be spent at the nearby store. The store was owned by the mine owner who also set the prices of the merchandise. Most stores were wood frame. Few of the original store still exist and today they are used for other purposes. They include:

WEST VIRGINIA

Whipple Company Store and Museum, Scarbro, WV (1890-1954). Located at 7485 Okey Patterson Road, Scarbro WV 25917, 15 road miles north of Beckley, Phone 304-266-0788, Website www.whipplecompanystore.com. Now used as a museum.

Ashland Company Store and Museum, Ashland, WV (1907-Present). Located at 5633 Cherokee Road, Rock (Ashland), WV 24747, 55 road miles southwest of Beckley, Phone 681-251-1118, Website www.ashlandcompanystore.com. Now used as a convenience store.

New River Company Store, Mount Hope, WV. Located on Main Street, Mount Hope, WV. Now used as a church.

Houston Company Store and Museum, Kimball, WV (1923). Located at 13 King Carswell Road, Kimball, WV 24853, 55 road miles southwest of Beckley and 25 miles northwest of Bluefield. Now used as a museum.

Itman Company Store, Itmann, WV (1918-1960's). Located 25 road miles southwest of Beckley. Large stone building is currently vacant.

PENNSYLVANIA

Eckley Miners' Village, Weatherly (1854-Present). Located at 2 Eckley Main Street, Weatherly, PA 18255, 8 miles northeast of Hazleton, Phone 570-636-2070, Website www.eckleyminersvillage.com. Now one of the Miners' Village buildings.

KENTUCKY

Southeast Coal Company Store, Seco, KY (1915-1957). Located in Seco, KY 41849, 30 miles northeast of Cumberland and Cumberland Gap, KY. Now used as a winery.

Barthell Coal Company Store, Strunk, KY (1910-1952). Located at 552 Barthell Rod, Strunk, KY 42649, near the border with Tennessee, 120 road miles south of Lexington, Phone 888-550-5748, Website www.barthellcoalcamp.com. Now is part of an open air history museum.

WHIPPLE COMPANY STORE
AND MUSEUM, SCARBRO, WV (1890-1954)



Whipple Company Store and Museum, Scarbro, WV (1890-1954). Located at 7485 Okey Patterson Road, Scarbro, WV 25917, 15 road miles north of Beckley, Phone 304-266-0788, Website www.whipplecompanystore.com. The front of the large wooden building is shown in the picture above.

Description. The Whipple Company Store was built in 1890 and was in operation until 1954, 64 years. The New River Company Whipple Mine closed in 1957. The large and unique Whipple store has 3 floors and a basement. The second floor was used to conceal things the mine owner did not want known. It also had a freight elevator, post office and telephone operator station. Today, the building houses the Appalachian Heritage Museum.

ASHLAND COMPANY STORE,
ASHLAND, WV (1907-PRESENT)



Ashland Company Store and Museum, Ashland, WV (1907-Present). Located at 5633 Cherokee Road, Rock (Ashland), WV 24747, 55 road miles southwest of Beckley, Phone 681-251-1118, Website www.ashlandcompanystore.com.

Description. The original company store building was built in 1907. In addition to the store, the building housed a warehouse, the paymaster's office, U.S. Post Office, and company offices. It is now used as a convenience store.

**PICTURE OF PV&K COAL COMPANY STORE,
GLOVER GAP MINE, KY**



Picture of PV&K Coal Company, Glover Gap Mine, KY. No longer exists.

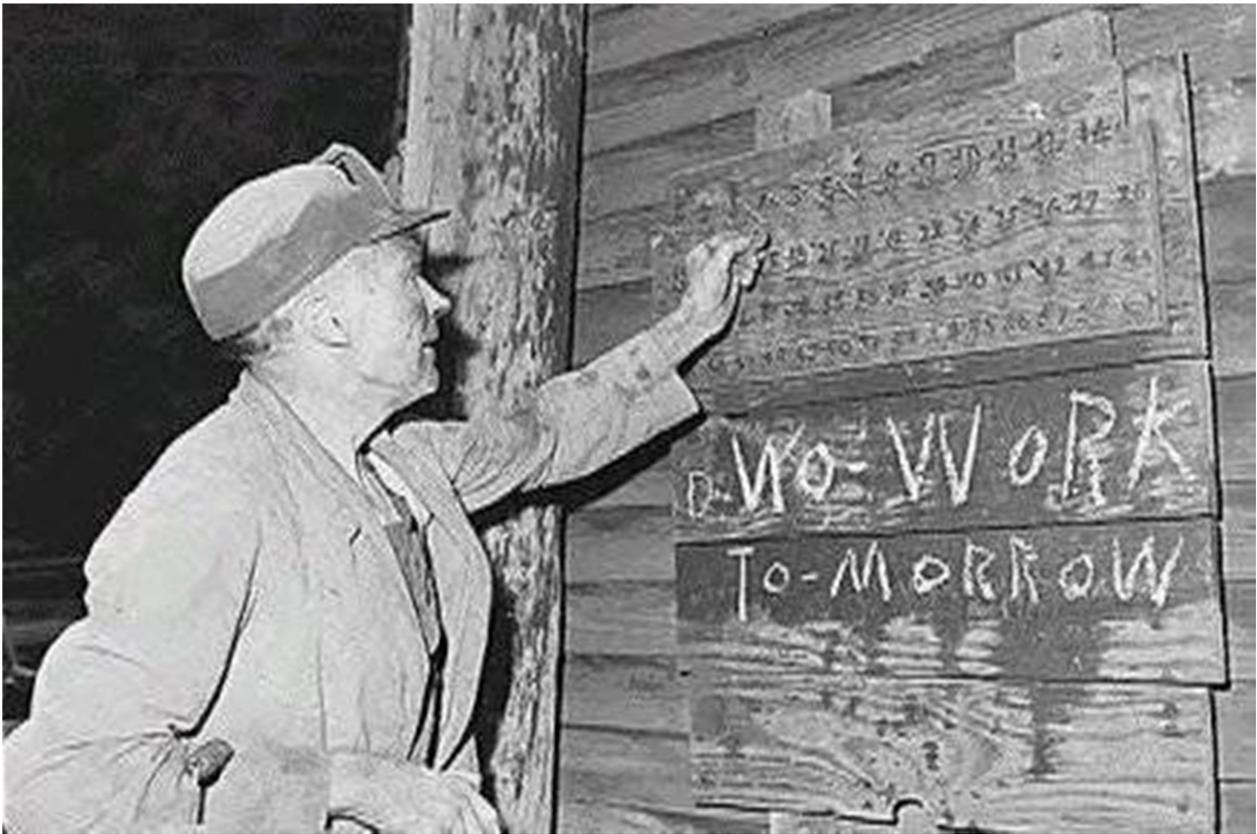
NATIONAL COAL HERITAGE TRAIL



National Coal Heritage Trail. Headquarters located at 100 Kelly Avenue, Oak Hill, WV 25901, Phone 304-465-3720, Website www.coalheritage.org. A map of the trail is shown in the picture above.

Description. The National Coal Heritage Trail is a driving route covers 187 miles through 13 counties of West Virginia from Bluefield in south to Hico and Ansted the north near the New River Gorge in the north. Sites along the trail include – Town of Bluefield, Town of Bramwell, Ashland Company Store, Houston Company Store, Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine, Cranberry Company Store, Whipple Company Store, Town of Thurmond, New River Gorge Bridge.

COAL MINER CAR TAGS



Coal Miner Car Tags.

Description. In the old days, coal miners were issued a number of metal car tags with a unique number identifying who they were. Pin tags in the shape of a safety pin were also used. As they worked independently, they loaded small cars by hand with coal that they had blasted and dug from the walls in the mine. They then placed one of their car tags on the car. Ponies were then used to pull the carts out of the mine. The cart was then weighed and the weight and miner number was recorded. The weight was reduced by the weight of any rock – e.g. slate, mixed in with the coal. The miner was then paid later by the total weight of the coal extracted.



COAL EXPLOSIVE CONTROL TOKNS



Coal Explosive Control Tokens. A token is shown in the picture above.

Description. Coal Explosive Control Tokens, also called “Exploders”, are different from Coal Company Store Scrip. They played an important and practical role in the issuance of explosives. The system was very simple. When a miner needed explosives he was given (or sold) tokens with an appropriate "good for" value - for example, "Good For One Stick Powder". The mine took these to the place where explosives were stored and there the tokens were redeemed for explosives. If the miner needed detonating devises - fuses, etc., he had to go to another location. For safety reasons, explosives and detonation devices were never stored at the same place.



MAJOR COAL MINE DISASTERS IN U.S.



Major Coal Mine Disasters in U.S. The memorial at the Upper Big Branch Mine, WV is shown in the picture above.

ILLINOIS

Cherry Mine – 1909 fire killed 259 miners.

Moweaqua – 1931 explosion killing 54 miners.

Centralia Mine – 1947 explosion killed 111 miners.

Orient Mine – 1951 explosion killed 119 miners.

KENTUCKY

Hurricane Creek – 1970 explosion killed 39 miners.

NEW MEXICO

Stag Canon Mine - 1913 explosion killed 263.

OHIO

Millfield Mine – 1930 explosion killing 82 miners.

Willow Grove Mine – 1940 explosion killed 72 miners.

PENNSYLVANIA

Avondale Mine – 1869 fire killed 108 miners.

Mammoth Mine – 1891 explosion killed 109 miners.

Rolling Mill Mine – 1902 explosion killed 112 miners.

Harwick Mine – 1904 explosion killed 179 miners.

Darr Mine – 1907 explosion killed 239 miners.

Marianna Mine – 1908 explosion killed 154 miners.

Baltimore Mine – 1919 explosion killed 92 miners.

Mather Mine – 1928 explosion killed 195 miners.

TENNESSEE

Fraterville Mine – 1902 explosion killed 216 miners.

Cross Mountain Mine – 1911 explosion killed 84 miners.

WEST VIRGINIA

Monongah Mine – 1907 explosion killed 362 plus - **Worst in America.**

Eccles Mine – 1914 explosion killed 183 miners.

Kimball Mine – 1919 explosion killed 221 miners.

Benwood Mine – 1924 explosion killed 119 coal miners.

Pond Creek Mine – 1940 explosion killed 91 miners.

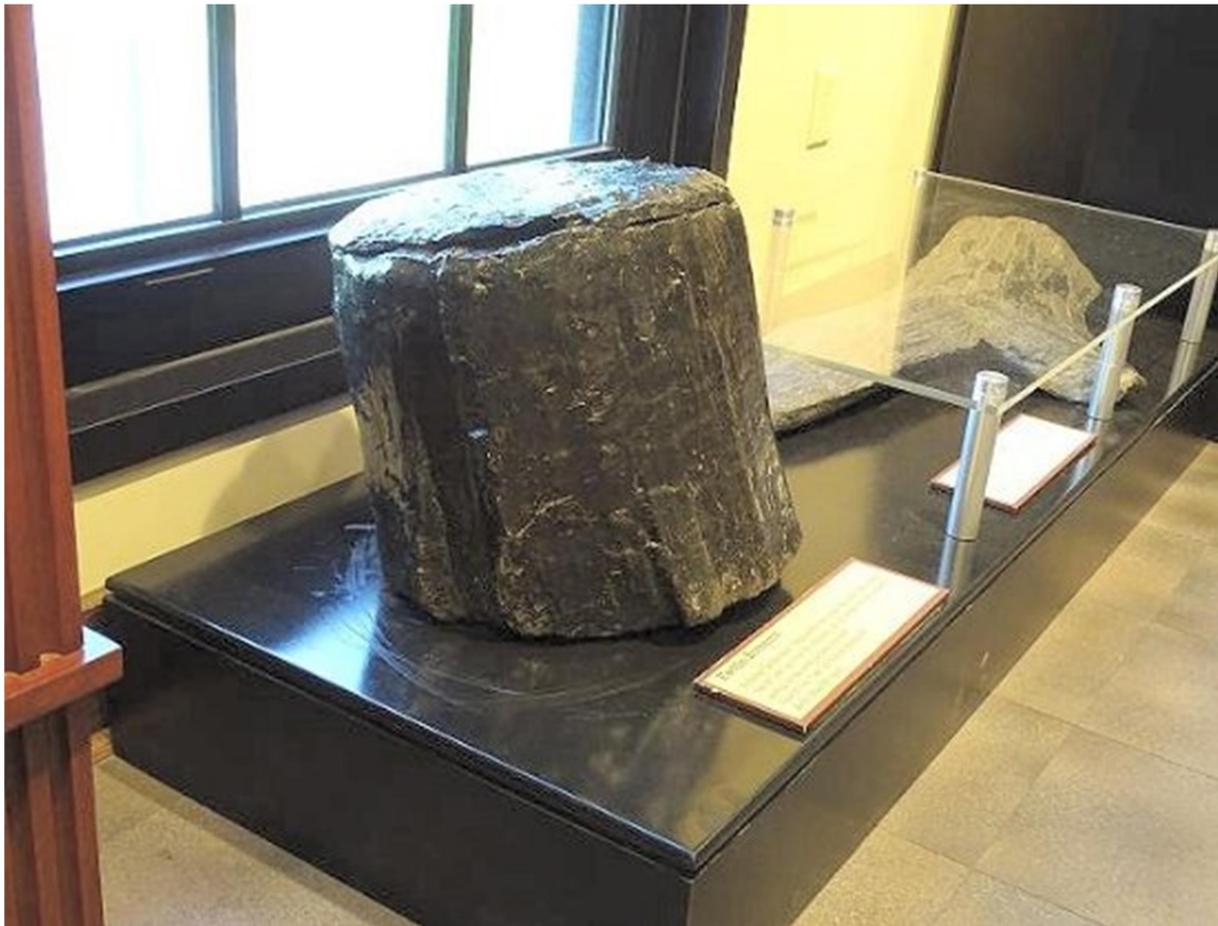
Farmington Mine – 1968 explosion killed 78 miners.

Upper Big Branch Mine – 2010 explosion killed 29 miners.

Consol Mine – 1968 explosion killed 78 miners.



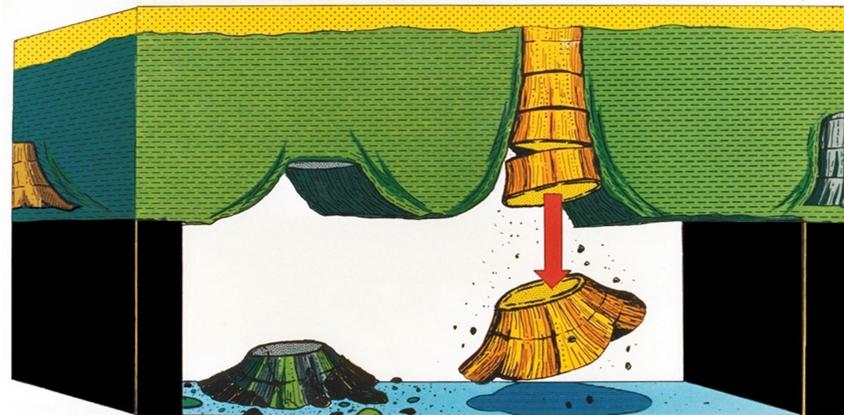
COAL KETTLE BOTTOMS



Coal Kettle Bottoms. Example located at the Beckley Exhibition Coal Mine.

Description. Underground coal mining is very dangerous work – particularly in the old days. One of the dangers is from what are called “Kettle Bottoms.” They are fossils of trees. As the miners dig tunnels into the mine, the Kettle Bottoms often remain in the roof of the mine above

the coal seam and are often hard to notice or see. At any time the parts can fall crushing or killing the miner.



CANARIES IN COAL MINES



Canaries in Coal Mines.

Description. The practice of using Canaries in small cages in coal mines began in 1911 in British mines and spread to the United States. It was based on the advice of Scottish scientist John Haldanel known as the “father of oxygen therapy”. Canaries were used to detect colorless

and odorless carbon monoxide and other poisonous gases before they hurt the miners. If the canaries became ill or died, that would give miners a warning to leave the mine. Canaries, like other birds, are good early detectors of carbon monoxide because they are vulnerable to airborne poisons. The use of canaries ended in 1986, when they were replaced by the “electronic nose” which is a detector with a digital reading. Pit ponies, the other animal that went underground with miners to haul coal. They were also replaced by automation and phased out by 1999.



WEST VIRGINIA COAL WARS (1912-1921)



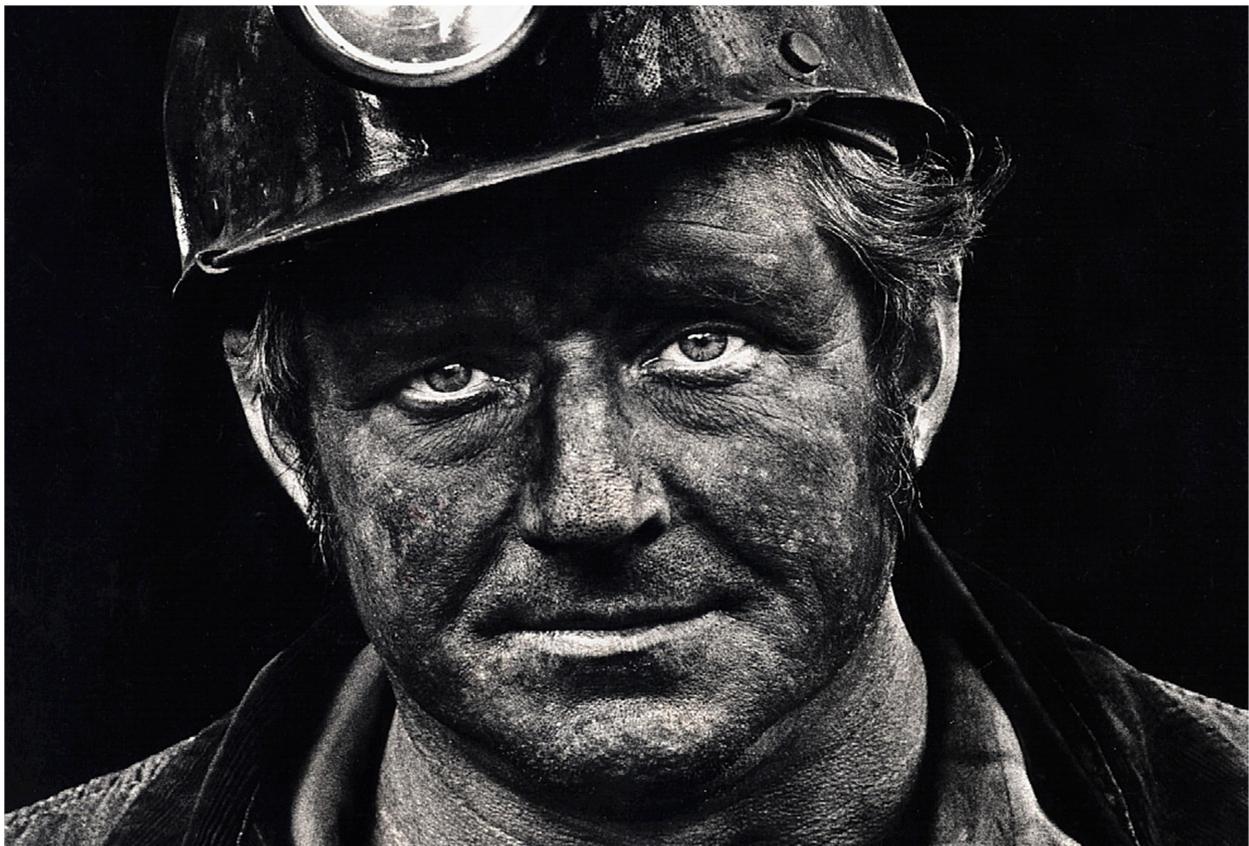
Description. The West Virginia Coal Wars were a series of miner strikes and conflicts between the miners and owner/operators who resisted the miner requests and demands. They included –

- (1) PAY - Better pay.
- (2) WORK - Better and safer working conditions.
- (3) TRADE - Right to trade where they pleased.
- (4) UNION - Recognition of the United Mine Workers (UMW).

Trade meant the ending the practice of forcing miners to buy from company owned stores. Work included the hiring of an inspector for the weighing of carts loaded with coal when they left the mine to ensure accuracy and having the company for the cost of the inspectors.

The owner/operators brought in detective agency people and other miners to provide security of their mines and attempt to break the strikes. The major events and conflicts included the – Cabin Creek and Paint Creek Strike (1912-1913), Battle of Matewan (1920), Battle of Blair Mountain (1921). The strikes and battles resulted in the defeat of the miners which would not be allowed to organize again until the 1930's.

BLACK LUNG DISEASE



Black Lung Disease.

Description. One of the working conditions in underground coal mines is - coal dust. With the breathing in of the fine dust particles over an extending period of time, miners can contract what is called - Black Lung (Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis, CWP). The particles accumulate in the

parts of the lung where oxygen from the air is taken up by the blood and carbon dioxide waste is released from the blood into the air. This causes inflammation and scarring of the lung tissue. Affects can include – shortness of breath, chronic cough, high blood pressure, heart problems. In severe cases it can result in premature death. There is no treatment or cure.



SONG – “16 TONS” (1947 & 1955)



Song – “16 Tons” (1947 & 1955). By Merle Travis and Tennessee Ernie Ford.

Description. "Sixteen Tons" is a song written by Merle Travis about a coal miner, based on life in mines in Muhlenberg County, Kentucky (southwest of Louisville). It was first sung by Travis, released in 1947 and became a gold record. The line - "You load sixteen tons and what do you get? Another day older and deeper in debt" came from a letter written by Travis's brother John. Another line came from their father, a coal miner, who would say - "I can't afford to die. I owe my soul to the company store." In 1955, it was recorded by Tennessee Ernie Ford and became the number one hit in the United States.

Lyrics.

“Some people say a man is made out of mud
A poor man's made out of muscle and blood
Muscle and blood and skin and bones
A mind that's weak and a back that's strong

You load sixteen tons, and what do you get
Another day older and deeper in debt
Saint Peter don't you call me 'cause I can't go
I owe my soul to the company store

I was born one mornin' when the sun didn't shine
I picked up my shovel and I walked to the mine
I loaded sixteen tons of number nine coal
And the straw boss said "Well, a-bless my soul"

You load sixteen tons, and what do you get
Another day older and deeper in debt
Saint Peter don't you call me 'cause I can't go
I owe my soul to the company store

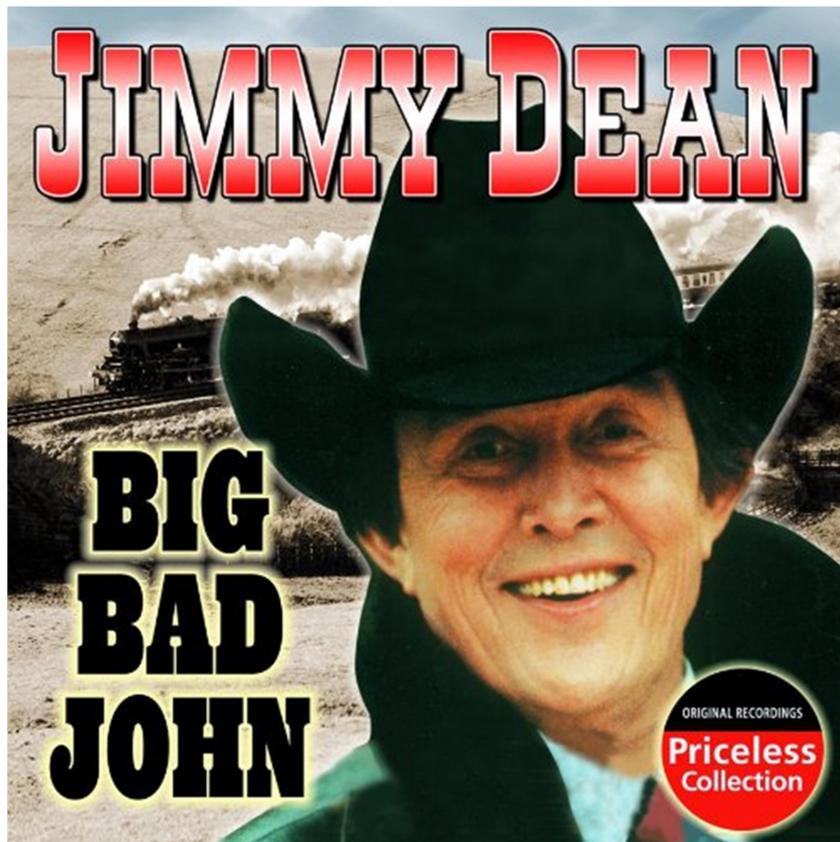
I was born one mornin', it was drizzlin' rain
Fightin' and trouble are my middle name
Raised in the Canebrake by an old mama lion
Ain't no a high-toned woman make me walk the line

You load sixteen tons, and what do you get
Another day older and deeper in debt
Saint Peter don't you call me 'cause I can't go
I owe my soul to the company store

If you see me comin', better step aside
A lot of men didn't, and a lot of men died
With one fist of iron, and the other of steel
If the right one don't get you then the left one will

You load sixteen tons, and what do you get
Another day older and deeper in debt
Saint Peter don't you call me 'cause I can't go
I owe my soul to the company store”

SONG – “BIG BAD JOHN” (1961)



Song – “Big Bad John” (1961). By Jimmy Dean.

Description. “Big Bad John” is a song written by Jimmy Dean in collaboration with Roy Acuff. It was recorded by Jimmy Dean, released in 1961, and became the number one hit in the United States. The song tells the story of a mysterious and quiet coal miner who earned the nickname Big John because of his height, weight, and muscular physique. Jimmy Dean’s inspiration for the character of Big John was an actor, John Minto, that Dean met who was 6'5". Dean would call him "Big John" and grew to like the rolling sound of the phrase.

Lyrics.

“Every mornin' at the mine you could see him arrive
He stood six-foot-six and weighed two-forty-five
Kinda broad at the shoulder and narrow at the hip
And everybody knew ya didn't give no lip to big John
(Big John, big John)
Big bad John (big John)

Nobody seemed to know where John called home
He just drifted into town and stayed all alone
He didn't say much, kinda quiet and shy
And if you spoke at all, you just said hi to Big John

Somebody said he came from New Orleans
Where he got in a fight over a Cajun Queen
And a crashin' blow from a huge right hand
Sent a Louisiana fellow to the promised land, big John
(Big John, big John)
Big bad John (big John)

Then came the day at the bottom of the mine
When a timber cracked and men started cryin'
Miners were prayin' and hearts beat fast
And everybody thought that they'd breathed their last, 'cept John

Through the dust and the smoke of this man-made hell
Walked a giant of a man that the miners knew well
Grabbed a saggin' timber, gave out with a groan
And like a giant oak tree he just stood there alone, big John
(Big John, big John)
Big bad John (big John)

And with all of his strength he gave a mighty shove
Then a miner yelled out "there's a light up above!"
And twenty men scrambled from a would-be grave
Now there's only one left down there to save, big John

With jacks and timbers they started back down
Then came that rumble way down in the ground

And then smoke and gas belched out of that mine
Everybody knew it was the end of the line for big John
(Big John, big John)
Big bad John (big John)

Now, they never reopened that worthless pit
They just placed a marble stand in front of it
These few words are written on that stand
At the bottom of this mine lies a big, big man
Big John
(Big John, big John)
Big bad John (big John)
(Big John) big bad John”

SONG & MOVIE – “COAL MINER’S DAUGHTER” (1970 & 1980)



Song & Movie – “Coal Miner’s Daughter” (1970 & 1980). By Loretta Lynn.

Descripton. The song - "Coal Miner's Daughter" is a song written and recorded by Loretta Lynn. released in 1970, and became the number one hit in the United States. The song tells the story of Lynn's coal-mining father in rural Butcher Holler, eastern KY and describes her childhood and the circumstances she was raised in. The home she grew up in, is open for tours by the public. The movie of the same name was released in 1980, with Sissy Spacek in the role of Loretta Lynn.

Lyrics.

“Well, I was borned a coal miner's daughter
In a cabin, on a hill in Butcher Holler
We were poor but we had love
That's the one thing that daddy made sure of
He shoveled coal to make a poor man's dollar

My daddy worked all night in the Van Lear coal mines
All day long in the field a hoin' corn
Mommy rocked the babies at night
And read the Bible by the coal oil light
And ever' thing would start all over come break of morn

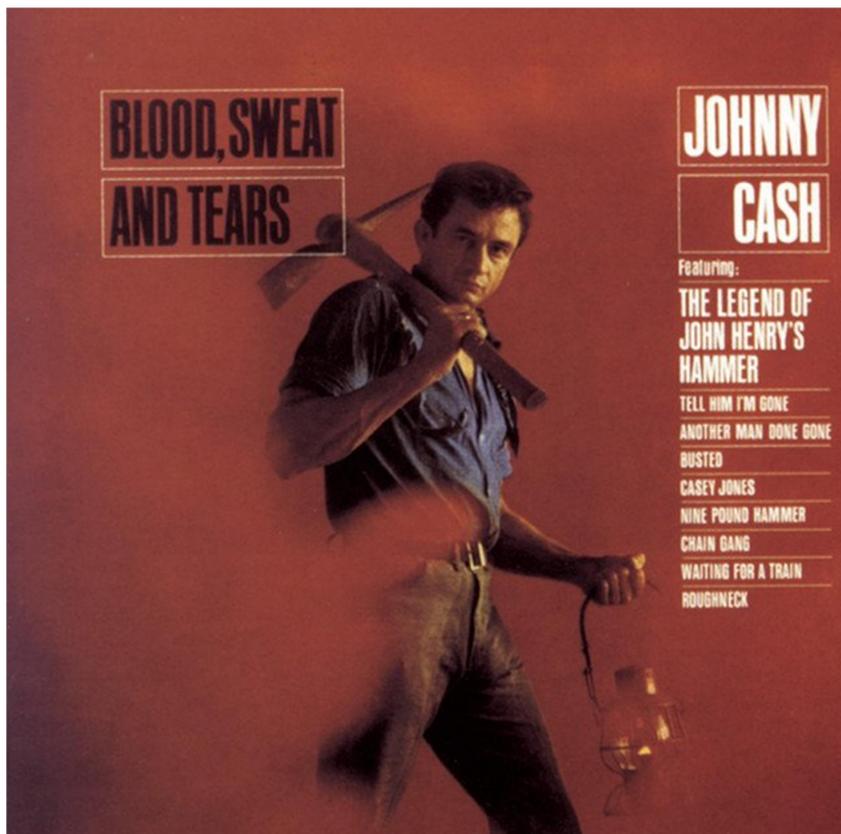
Daddy loved and raised eight kids on a miner's pay
Mommy scrubbed our clothes on a washboard ever' day
Why I've seen her fingers bleed
To complain, there was no need
She'd smile in mommy's understanding way

In the summertime we didn't have shoes to wear
But in the wintertime we'd all get a brand new pair
From a mail order catalog
Money made from selling a hog
Daddy always managed to get the money somewhere

Yeah, I'm proud to be a coal miner's daughter
I remember well, the well where I drew water
The work we done was hard
At night we'd sleep 'cause we were tired
I never thought of ever leaving Butcher Holler

Well a lot of things have changed since a way back then
And it's so good to be back home again
Not much left but the floor, nothing lives here anymore
Except the memory of a coal miner's daughter

SONG – “THE LEGEND OF JOHN HENRY”



Description. The “John Henry” is a song about a African American man who was not a coal miner, but a railroad construction worker on the CSX railroad line that hauled coal out of West Virginia that was mined there. The song’s story is about John Henry racing the new automated steam drill (the epic battle of man versus machine) to drill holes to place explosives to blast away rock in a tunnel construction. Is it a true story? John Henry did exist and he raced and beat a steam drill in the early 1870’s. It probably did not happen in the Big Bend tunnel in Talcott, WV, but 40 miles to the east in the Lewis tunnel. John Henry also did not die soon after the race. There were several slightly different versions of the song and it was sung and recorded by a number of people including Johnny Cash, Burl Ives, Woody Guthrie, Jimmy Dean, Jerry Lee Lewis, Harry Belafonte, and Bruce Springsteen.

Lyrics.

John Henry was a little baby, sitting on the his papa's knee
He picked up a hammer and little piece of steel
Said "Hammer's gonna be the death of me, Lord, Lord
Hammer's gonna be the death of me"

The captain said to John Henry
"Gonna bring that steam drill 'round
Gonna bring that steam drill out on the job
Gonna whop that steel on down, Lord, Lord
Gonna whop that steel on down"

John Henry told his captain
"A man ain't nothing but a man
But before I let your steam drill beat me down
I'd die with a hammer in my hand, Lord, Lord
I'd die with a hammer in my hand"

John Henry said to his shaker
"Shaker, why don't you sing?
I'm throwin' thirty pounds from my hips on down
Just listen to that cold steel ring, Lord, Lord
Just listen to that cold steel ring"

John Henry said to his shaker
"Shaker, you'd better pray
'Cause if I miss that little piece of steel
Tomorrow be your buryin' day, Lord, Lord
Tomorrow be your buryin' day"

The shaker said to John Henry
"I think this mountain's cavin' in!"

John Henry said to his shaker, "Man
That ain't nothin' but my hammer suckin' wind! Lord, Lord
That ain't nothin' but my hammer suckin' wind!"

Now the man that invented the steam drill
Thought he was mighty fine
But John Henry made fifteen feet
The steam drill only made nine, Lord, Lord
The steam drill only made nine

John Henry hammered in the mountains
His hammer was striking fire
But he worked so hard, he broke his poor heart
He laid down his hammer and he died, Lord, Lord
He laid down his hammer and he died

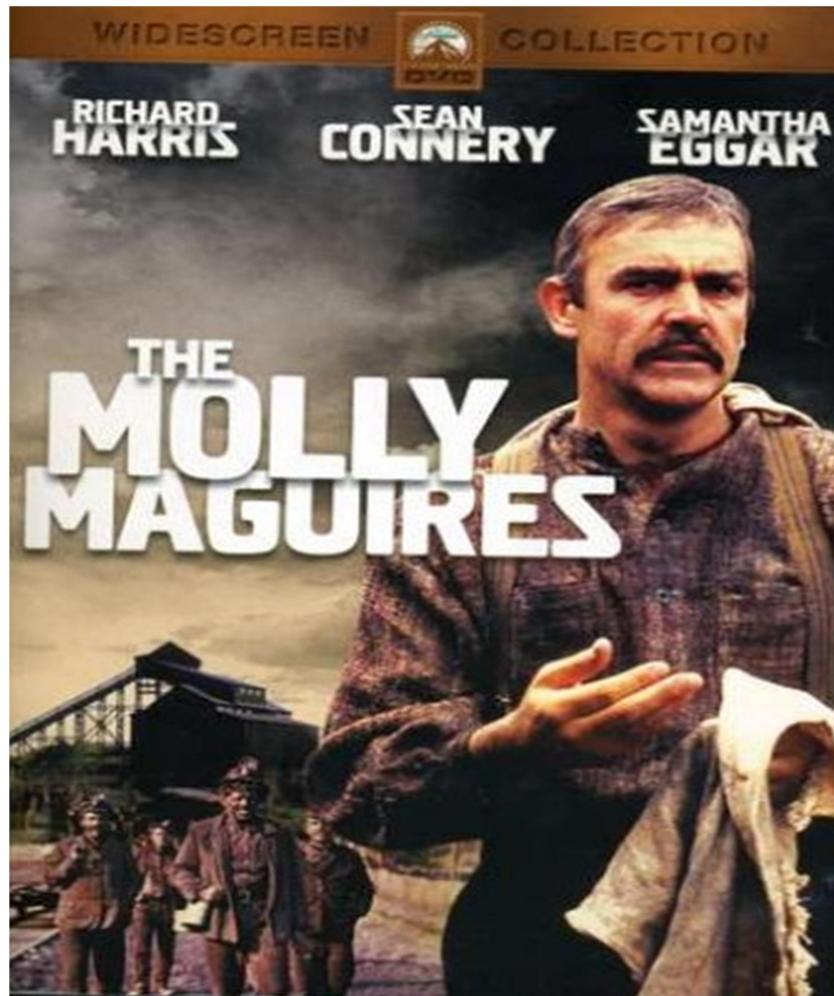
John Henry had a little woman
Her name was Polly Ann
John Henry took sick and went to his bed
Polly Ann drove steel like a man, Lord, Lord
Polly Ann drove steel like a man

John Henry had a little baby
You could hold him in the palm of your hand
The last words I heard that poor boy say
"My daddy was a steel driving man, Lord, Lord
My daddy was a steel driving man"

They took John Henry to the graveyard
And they buried him in the sand
And every locomotive comes a-roaring by
Says "There lies a steel-driving man, Lord, Lord
There lies a steel-driving man"

Well every Monday morning
When the bluebirds begin to sing
You can hear John Henry a mile or more
You can hear John Henry's hammer ring, Lord, Lord
You can hear John Henry's hammer ring

MOVIE – “MOLLY MAGUIRES” (1970)

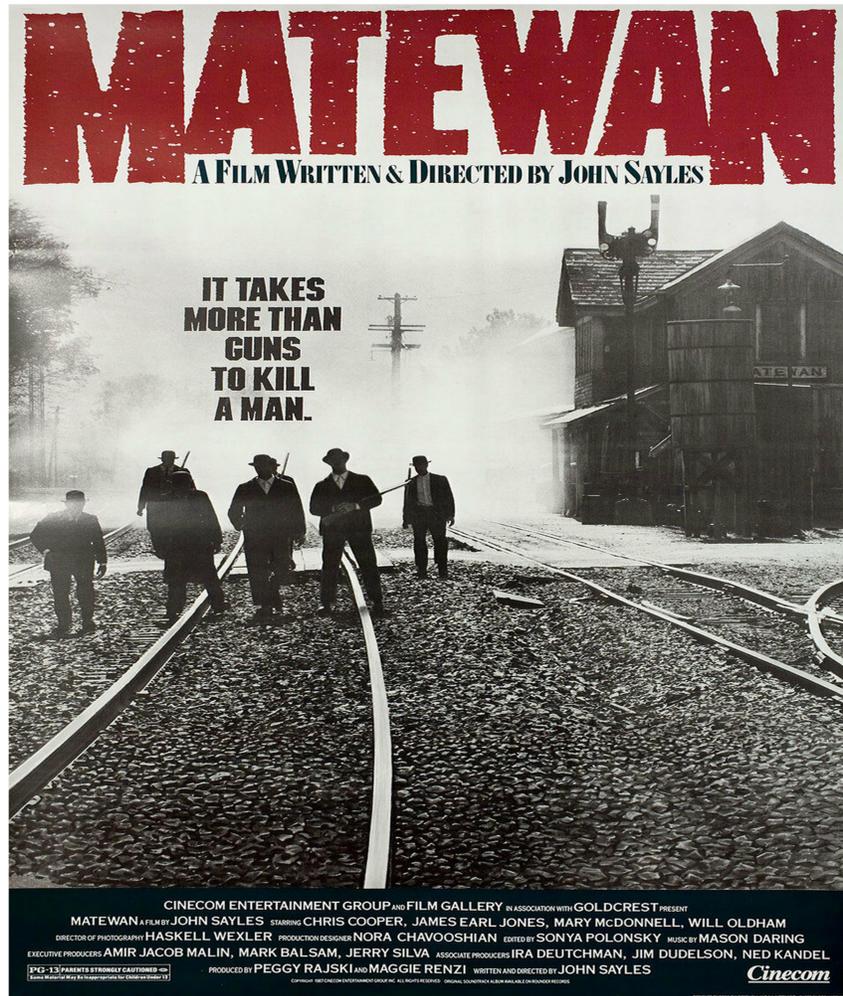


Movie – “Molly MaGuires” (1970). Starring Sean Connery (as Black Jack Kehoe) and Richard Harris (as Detective James McParlan/James McKenna).

Description. “The Molly Maguires” is a historical drama movie released in 1970. It is based on a 1964 novel by Arthur Lewis, and partly inspired by a true story. Set in the late 1800’s northeastern Pennsylvania, it tells the story of an undercover detective sent to a coal mining town to expose a secret society of Irish-American miners battling exploitation by the coal mine owners. The movie was filmed in the Pennsylvania towns of Eckley (town), Jim Thorpe (courtroom), and Bloomberg (railroads).

Eckley. The town was so unchanged from its 1870’s appearance that the only major alterations needed for filming were to remove television antennas and install underground electric wiring. A wooden coal breaker which was built as a prop and is featured extensively in the film, partially stands to this day. The movie resulted in the town’s being saved from demolition.

MOVIE – “MATEWAN” (1987)



Movie – “Matewan” (1987). Starring Chris Cooper, James Earl Jones and others.

Description. “Matewan” is a drama movie released in 1987. It is based on a true story of the Battle of Matewan - between miners and [Baldwin–Felts](#) detectives, The battle resulted from the attempt of coal miners to unionize and the miners’ strike in 1920. The gunfight in downtown Matewan on May 19, 1920, had all the elements of a high-noon showdown - on one side, the heroes (a pro-union sheriff and mayor) - on the other, the villainous henchmen (detectives). Within 15 minutes, ten people were dead - seven detectives, two miners and the mayor. The film was made in West Virginia with the town of Thurmond standing in for Matewan. Other scenes were filmed along the New River Gorge National River.

Matewan, The small town is located at the confluence of the Tug Fork River and Mate Creek, between West Virginia and Kentucky. It was named after Matteawan (now called Beacon), a town in upstate New York. The West Virginia Mine Wars Museum is located in town. There is also an annual re-enactment of the shootout. Matewan is best known for the historic feud and fights between the Hatfields (in West Virginia) and McCoys (across the Tug River in Kentucky).