WL 504

West Virginia University
EXTENSION SERVICE

Mining Historical Treasures

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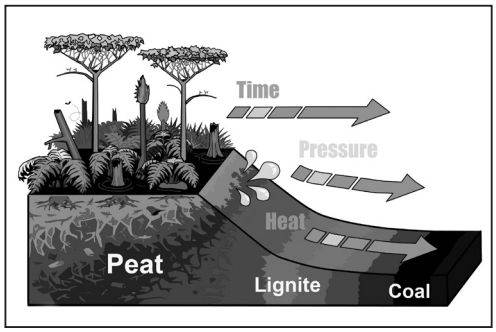
There are many places that are important to West Virginia's coal mining history. Many of these are open to the public and help tell the story of coal.

West Virginia's coal history

Coal has a long and rich history in West Virginia. In 1742, John Peter Salley took a trip across the Allegheny Mountains and discovered coal along a tributary of the Kanawha River, an area now in Boone County, West Virginia. This is the first known reference to coal in what is now West Virginia.

Extensive mining in West Virginia didn't begin until the mid-1800s. Coal has been critically important to West Virginia's economic state throughout the years. West Virginia led the nation in coal production from 1927 until 1973.

What is coal?



Coal is used as an energy source for heat and electricity. Manufacturers and industries also use coal and coal by-products to make chemicals, cement, paper, ceramics, plastics, medicines, fertilizers, and tar.

There are many places that are important to West Virginia's coal mining history. Let's explore these locations!

National Coal Heritage Authority and the Coal Heritage Trail

www.coalheritage.org

The Coal Heritage Authority includes 13 counties in southern West Virginia. The Coal Heritage Trail is located within the National Coal Heritage Area. Explore this National Scenic Byway through more than 187 miles to see some of the region's most historic coal towns.

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Northern Appalachian Coal Mining Heritage Association

22 Coal Country Lane, Fairmont, WV
www.orgsites.com/wv/nacmha

The Northern Appalachian Coal Mining Heritage Association (NACMHA) educates the public on regional coal history with a focus on Barbour, Harrison, Marion, Monongalia, Preston, and Taylor counties. Visit the seasonal interactive coal mining museum in Fairmont.

Exhibition Coal Mine

513 Ewart Avenue, Beckley, WV
www.beckley.org/exhibition_coal_mine

Ride through the dark passages of a vintage coal mine and enjoy a guided tour by veteran miners. The Exhibition Coal Mine is open seasonally and is available for group tours and special events.

Coal Heritage Museum

347 Main Street, Madison, WV
www.wvcoalmuseum.org

Boone County boasts being the first place coal was discovered in West Virginia. This museum seeks to preserve the heritage of the southern West Virginia coalfields through artifacts, tools, photographs, oral history, and coal company records.

Whipple Company Store and Appalachian Heritage Museum

7485 Okey L. Patteson Road (Hwy 612), Scarbro, WV
www.whipplecompanystore.com

The coal camp company store was the center of a coal community. Learn about the unique architecture of this building and the history of coal camp life.

Scott's Run Museum

Osage, WV
www.as.wvu.edu/~srsh/tour.html

Scott's Run was a bustling coal town in the early 1920s. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt worked to improve living conditions on "The Run." The Scott's Run Museum celebrates and preserves the history of the coal-boom era in Monongalia County.

Bramwell

Bramwell Town Hall, Bramwell, WV
www.bramwellwv.com

Known as the "Town of the Millionaires," Bramwell was home to the richest and most well-known coal barons. The town offers self-guided tours, group tours year-round, and tours of the historic mansions.

Matewan

Matewan, WV
www.matewan.com

On May 19, 1920, Matewan was the site of one of the deadliest shootouts in American history. The firefight between Baldwin-Felts Agency guards and striking miners resulted in the deaths of two miners, seven agents, and the mayor.

Blair Mountain

Blair Mountain Heritage Alliance, Blair, WV
www.blairmountain.org

The five-day battle at Blair Mountain was the largest labor insurrection in U.S. history. In August 1921, up to 13,000 miners hoping to organize the United Mine Workers in the southern coalfields were led by organizer Bill Blizzard on a march to Logan County. The revolting miners were turned back by gas and pipe bombs dropped by the U.S. Army Air Service.

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Front photo: *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:W._Va._coal_mine_1908.jpg#filelinks*
What's coal photo: *http://www.uky.edu/KGS/coal/coalform_download.htm*

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