

Dark as a Dungeon – Researching Mining Records

United States Mining History

Gold and Silver Mining	Coal Mining
<p>1848 – The California Gold Rush brings 300,000 people from around the world.</p> <p>1858 – People flock to Colorado during the Pike’s Peak Gold Rush.</p> <p>1859 – Silver veins are discovered in Colorado.</p> <p>1898-1911 – Three gold rushes occur in Alaska, bringing prospectors and miners to the Yukon Valley. These include the Nome Gold Rush, the Klondike Gold Rush, and the Fairbanks Gold Rush.</p>	<p>Mid-1800s – Bituminous coal overtook anthracite coal.</p> <p>1900 – Some coal mining began before, but techniques didn’t develop until after</p> <p>1900 - The first conveyor belt was developed.</p> <p>1960s – Smaller coal companies merge into larger diversified firms.</p> <p>2008 – Competition in the industry is more intense than ever. Led to better technology and new mines.</p>

Mining Technology:

- Primitive tools were use in the beginning.
 - Mining shafts were dug out by hand.
- Picks and hammers were replaced with fire to clear tunnels.
- Explosives began to be used in the Middle Ages to break up large rocks.
 - Black powder was eventually replaced with dynamite – mid-1800s.
 - Drills, lifts, and steam-powered pumps were invented.
- Modern mining techniques extract 85% of minerals and 98% or metallic ores without digging a shaft or endangering workers.
 - Can excavate with more accuracy and do less harm to environment.

Occupations Within Mining:

Different functions of the individual miner. Many of the roles are specific to a type of mining, such as coal mining. Roles considered to be "miners" in the narrower sense have included:

- Hewer (also known as "breaker" or "pickman"), whose job was to hew the rock.
- Collier, a hewer who hews coal with a pick.
- Driller, who works a rock drill to bore holes for placing dynamite or other explosives.
- Other roles within mines that did not involve breaking rock (and thus fit the broader definition) have included:
 - Loader (also called a "bandsman"), who loads the mining carts with coal at the face.
 - Putter (also known as a "drags-man"), who works the carts around the mine.
 - Barrow-man, who transported the broken coal from the face in wheelbarrows.
 - Hurrier, who transported coal carts from a mine to the surface.

- Timbers, who fashions and installs timber supports to support the walls and ceiling in an underground mine.
- In addition to miners working underground, a mine employs other workers in duties at the surface. In addition to the office staff of various sorts, these may include:
 - Brakesman, who operate the winding engine.
 - Breaker boy who breaks coal.
 - Emergency Structure Engineer, who makes sure that cave-ins are dealt with when called.

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