

Coal Mine #2 opened in 1891 and was the largest of Madison Coal Corporation's four mines in the Glen Carbon area. It remained in operation the longest, closing in 1931. A coal report for the year 1910 stated that Mine #2 hoisted 195,218 tons of coal and employed 250 miners.

As told by: LeRoy Harris, Coal Mining in the Glen Carbon Area, A History of Glen Carbon, published 1992

One of the most deadly operations the miner had to face was "shooting down the coal." About 3 p.m. he would light the fuses he had inserted into the "face" of the coal seam and get to a safe place to wait for the charges to go off. He would count them to make sure all the shots fired; if a miner went back on misfired shots he could get caught in an explosion. The blasting was done at the end of the working day to minimize the amount of coal dust the miner had to breathe.

The greatest danger to the miner besides the blasting were falls of slate, rock, or clay from the roof of his workplace.

The mule driver had to be a fatalist because he had a very dangerous job. The mule driver worked all day riding the "tail chain" which was about five feet long with a hook on one end and the mule on the other. The driver would hook the mule to the coal car and call the mule to move forward. As the chain became tight, he would jump on it and ride the chain, keeping one hand on the rump of the mule and the other against the coal car to keep the chain taut. This was quite a feat on a down slope where the car would tend to overtake the mule. Since the miner's hands were not free, the mule had to respond to "gee" and "haw." It was an amazing sight to see how smoothly these two got along in their daily jobs.

At the end of the day, the driver picked up the miners for a "man trip." That old mule knew he was heading for the barn. They would be going so fast—the driver's light was just a little blue flame and the mule was running in total darkness, his ears just touching the top of the cross bars and his feet kicking out chunks of coal. It was a scary ride.



Madison Coal Corporation, Mine #2



Ed Smith, Garbaldi Raffaele, Louis Trebing, 15 yrs. old, circa 1910



Ice skaters at Mine #2



Dinner in the mine. Mike Sedlacek is indicated by the arrow



Trail Info



Glen Carbon Historical
& Museum Commission