

Mid-Lothian Mines and Rail Roads

COAL MINING CHRONOLOGY IN CHESTERFIELD

- 1835 Mid-Lothian Coal Mining Company is chartered.
- 1836 The Company organizes with 3,000 shares valued at \$100 each with 1,000 shares being sold to raise \$100,000 capital. The Wooldridge family contributes 404.5 acres valued at \$300,000. Four shafts are sunk: Pump Shaft, Middle Shaft, Grove Shaft and Wood Shaft.
- 1837 These pits produce only 70,000 bushels of coal. About 2,660 tons are moved by the Chesterfield (Gravity) Railroad.
- 1838 In March, 42 African-Americans, mostly slaves, are killed at Black Heath mine in the new 700-foot shaft.
- 1839 A 36 foot thick coal seam is hit 722 feet deep in Pump Shaft. Work in other shafts is stopped to mine this seam.
- 1840 Three hundred thousand bushels are extracted (11,400 tons) from Pump Shaft from the labor of 150 men and boys and 25 mules.
- 1843 The Reverend J.B. Jeter preaches sermons underground in mine.
- 1846 Miners, free blacks and slaves establish Mid-Lothian African Church, now the First Baptist Church of Midlothian.
- 1850 The steam powered Richmond and Danville Railroad opens Coalfield Station at Midlothian. The old Chesterfield (Gravity) Railroad is replaced.
- 1855 An explosion at Pump Shaft kills 55 men. Heavy flooding enters mine.
- 1856 Attempts to end the flooding problem by tapping into old mines fail with 10 men drowning.
- 1861 Mines are pumped out, but then catch fire. Equipment and supplies are abandoned.
- 1863 Richmond and Danville Railroad Spur line hauls coal from Grove Shaft to Richmond.
- 1867 Post Civil War attempts to revive mines fail. R.S. Burrows of New York provides \$180,000 to fund construction of Sinking Shaft, over 1,300 feet deep, but no coal is found.
- 1868 R.S. Burrows purchases site and under the direction of mining engineer Oswald Heinrich, the beginning of operations is plagued with many problems.
- 1870 At the first meeting of the Chesterfield County Board of Supervisors, a county seal is adopted showing: "a coal miner leaning on a pick under a pine tree with a flowing river at his feet."
- 1873 Operations begin at the re-opening of the Grove Shaft.
- 1876 An explosion of firedamp, a methane gas blast associated with coal mines, kills eight at Grove Shaft. Heinrich leaves the company.
- 1880 Approximately 13,122 tons of coal is produced from a seam measuring 4 2/3 feet thick.
- 1882 The Grove Shaft again explodes, killing 32 men.
- 1905 James River Coal Corporation builds a new incline track railroad only 900 ft. south of the Grove Shaft.
- 1906 Murphy Coal Corporation takes control, but because of lawsuits, ends coal mining in 1923.
- 1923 Coal mining operations gradually ceased.

