



Celebrating Drumheller Valley's Mining Centennial Fascinating Facts 'n Trivia (Test your knowledge)

What was Joseph Tyrrell looking for when he arrived in the Valley in 1884?

- a) Dinosaurs
- b) Coal deposits
- c) First Nations to trade with

Answer: b) Coal Deposits. Tyrrell was working for the Geological Survey of Canada looking for mineral and coal deposits. He not only found *Albertosaurus* fossils, but he also mapped one of North America's largest coal deposits.

What kind of coal was considered to be Drumheller Coal?

- a) Anthracite – perfect for metallurgy
- b) Bituminous – ideal for steam
- c) Sub-Bituminous – ideal for home heating, cooking, and electrical generation
- d) Lignite – also suitable for home heating, cooking and electrical generation

Answer: b) Sub-Bituminous – a softer, or immature coal that is ideal for home heating and cooking.

What was the total number of coal mines to operate in the Drumheller Valley?

- a) Less than 10
- b) Between 10 and 50
- c) Between 50 and 100
- d) More than 100

Answer: d) There were more than 139 registered coal mines in Drumheller Valley

How much coal was extracted from the Drumheller Valley?

- a) 600,000 pounds
- b) 6,000,000 pounds
- c) 6,000,000 tons
- d) 60,000,000 tons

Answer: d) 60 million tons - enough coal to fill over 1.5 million boxcars. If one were to line up the boxcars end to end, it would make a train that is more than 25,000 km long – the same distance as the circumference of the Earth at East Coulee's latitude.

What coal mine is the new St. Anthony's School in Drumheller built on?

- a) Brilliant Mine
- b) Atlas Mine
- c) Commander Mine
- d) Midland Mine

Answer: A) Brilliant Mine. The Brilliant first opened in 1927 and finally closed in 1958.

How many men were killed in the Drumheller mines?

- a) 50
- b) 100
- c) 150
- d) more than 150

Answer: D) over 170 men were killed in Drumheller valley mining accidents between 1911 and 1965.

What was the average temperature inside the tunnels of Drumheller Valley Coal Mines?

- a) 10 degrees Celsius
- b) 10 – 15 degrees Celsius
- c) 15 – 20 degrees Celsius
- d) 20 – 30 degrees Celsius

Answer: b) 10 to 15 degrees Celsius was the average temperature, summer or winter.

Where were the brothels?

The Drumheller Valley featured two major brothels, both of which were tolerated by the community and known for their generous contributions to community life. Both brothels were located on the outskirts of the community, near the current location of the meat packing plant and the Drumheller cemetery. In addition, there were numerous smaller establishments in the various mine communities.

When did Drumheller Valley's first commercial coal mine officially open?

The Newcastle mine officially opened in 1911.

How much did coal cost?

During the Second World War, coal could be priced no higher than \$8 per ton. At that time, Drumheller coal sold for \$5.15 per ton of lump and \$4.15 per ton of egg coal. In 1964, prices increased to \$10.25 per ton of lump and \$9.25 per ton of egg coal.

How many days a year did the miners work?

The number of working days varied according to demand. For example, in 1933, they worked 97 days. In 1943, they worked 271. Miners liked cold winters, when people bought lots of coal.

How much money did a Drumheller Valley coal miner make?

In 1938, contract miners, paid by production, earned between \$0.60 per ton \$0.77 per ton. At the Atlas, the average pay for a surface worker between 1930 and 1944 was \$4.77. The average pay for an underground worker at this time was \$7.37. In 1947, company miners began to make a standard wage of \$14 per day.

Where could a coal miner cash his cheque if the banks were closed?

The tavern! On payday, bar owners would often call the nearest coal mine office to determine the payroll in order to prepare for the onslaught of cheques that would be cashed.

What was the job of the Pit Pony?

Pit ponies hauled empty cars to miners for filling, and loaded cars away towards the surface.

How many ponies worked in a mine?

Before mechanisation, a mine could have as many as 80 working pit ponies.

How many people lived in the Drumheller Valley during the coal mining years?

The valley had about 50 residents by 1911, but by the late 1920s, more than 10 000 people had moved here because of the mines. Today there are approximately 7000 people living in the whole valley. Some valley communities are ghost towns.

What type of lamp was commonly used in the Drumheller Valley Coal Mines until the late 1940s and early 50s?

The carbide lamp – an open flame light worn on the coal miner's cap.

What animals could be found inside a working Drumheller Valley coal mine?

Mice and pit ponies

Why were coal miners generally laid-off in the summer?

Demand for coal dropped off during the warm seasons.

Did the Drumheller Valley have any mining disasters?

Only one: The Monarch explosion of 1941. Three men were killed when methane gas exploded in the developing mine. A fourth man, the mine manager at the Atlas, was killed in the rescue attempt. The Monarch Mine was located immediately southeast of the Atlas. To be considered as a mine "disaster," four or men must be killed in one event.

Who were the owners of the Newcastle Mine – Drumheller's first commercial coal mine –

Jesse Gouge and Garnet Napier Coyle. Coyle sold his Hardware store in Acme and borrowed \$10,000 from his mother to partner with machinery storeowner Jesse Gouge.

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When was the Atlas Mine shut down?

The Atlas Coal Company Ltd. was initially formed by four business partners but was soon bought out by one partner, Dr. O. Patrick, and remained in the Patrick family's ownership until the end. The Atlas was in fact four different mines: The Atlas #1 ran from 1917 to 1928, the Atlas #2 from 1928 to 1936, the Atlas #3 from 1936 to 1956, and the Atlas #4 from 1956 to 1979.

How old is the train bridge near the Atlas Coal mine?

The wooden C.P.R. "Howe Truss" bridge over the Red Deer River at East Coulee was built in 1936 and destroyed by heavy flooding and ice flows in April 1948. It was rebuilt soon thereafter. It was already an old-fashioned design when it was built, as wooden Howe Truss bridges were primarily used in the 19th century. As such, it is very rare.

How much does "Linda", the restored locomotive at the Atlas Coal Mine weigh?

Linda, the restored Mancha locomotive weight approximately, is 3.5 tons.

How many people worked at the Atlas Coal mine?

Between 1930 and 1944, the mine employed an average of 150 workers per year.

How much coal did the Atlas Coal mine produce in a year?

Coal production fluctuated according to demand, ranging from 85,680 tons in 1931 to 212,172 tons produced in 1942. In 1948, 161 225 tons of coal were mined. In 1964, 190 407 tons of coal were mined underground and 26 494 tons were strip-mined.

What kinds of accidents happened at the Atlas Mine?

Between its opening in 1917 and its closing in 1979, 13 people died in the Atlas mines. These deaths were due to rock falls, methane gas, and machinery-related accidents. Miners' backs and fingers were the most commonly injured body parts.

How loud was the Atlas mine?

The noise of the Atlas Coal Mine's tippie in operation could be heard over a mile away in East Coulee!

How much coal could the Atlas Coal tippie storage bins hold?

Each of the four coal storage bins of the Atlas could hold up to 80 tons of coal (two boxcar loads).

How high was the Atlas Coal mine?

Coal seams ranged in height from 6.4m at the Twin Hills mine to a mere 0.6m at the Lion Mine or 0.3m at Gatine's Mine. The Atlas #1 had a 1.5m seam, while the Atlas #2 had a 1.6m seam, as did the Atlas #3. The Atlas #4 was a shaft mine reached by a 420-foot elevator shaft and was 3.1m thick.