

The Chester Mine



Coal deteriorated rapidly when exposed to the air. Sheds such as these at Dunmore, near Medicine Hat were erected to protect the coal from the elements.
Sir Alexander Galt Museum & Archives



July 1928, Coal Mine Memorial erected in Galt Gardens. It was built entirely of coal which was said to have come from the Chester Mine.
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The Chester Mine, designated Mine #1095 by the government registry, was located approximately 1.6 km north of Pavan Park, (3.2 km north of Hardieville). It was variously called the Suran Mine, the Royal Mine, the Royal Lethbridge Mine, and the Chester Mine, and operated from 1923 to 1951. It mined a total of 355,678 tonnes of coal. The mine supplied coal for the local domestic trade and shipped to Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Vancouver, Washington, and Alaska.

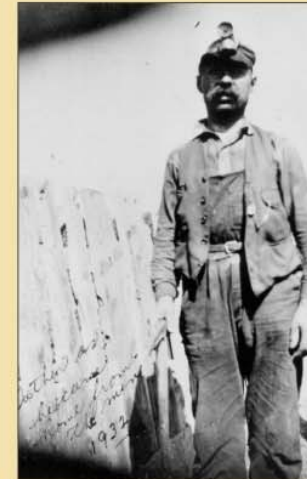
The Chester mine was one of the first mines in the Lethbridge field to have electricity. In October of 1929, Cy Chester made a serious effort to introduce electrification and modernization to the mine. Electricity was not welcomed in many mines because of the dangers of sparking. During the years of operation of the Chester Mine, Cy Chester's position vacillated between owner, (1925-1928) and manager for other owners both before and after that time.

The mine flooded on January 5, 1951, when a Chester miner accidentally cut through into the water filled workings of the former Galt No. 6 Mine. Fortunately the flooding was gradual or there could have been a major catastrophe with the loss of many lives. An attempt to pump out the water, even at one million gallons per day, proved futile and in February 1951 the decision was made to abandon the mine. By July all openings to the mine had been filled in, and all entrances sealed off.

When the flooding occurred, the mine was the oldest continuously operating mine in the Lethbridge field.



A group of miners receive instruction from C.S. Donaldson. Every miner had to meet certain qualifications to work below ground.
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Picture is captioned "Father as he comes home from the mine." Not all mines had "wash houses" for miners to clean up at the end of their shifts.
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