

The Galt Mines



Galt Shaft #1, showing cars being loaded with lump, nut and slack coal. Alberta Railway & Coal Co. Lethbridge, N.W.T.

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Galt Miners Baseball Team won the Alberta Senior Baseball Championship in 1936. The Galt and other mining companies were substantial supporters of sports and recreation in Lethbridge and district.

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The City of Lethbridge is here today because of the coal found in the Oldman River Valley. One of the major operators of the coal years, (1874 - 1969) was the Galt Mine Co. initially owned by Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt under the name of the North Western Coal and Navigation Co. The company operated under several names until its sale to the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1912. After the CPR purchase, the company continued the Galt Mine name. The registered trade mark was "Galt Coal". The logo was a shield with black and red writing saying "Galt Coal: Burns All Night".

Nine drift mines and seven shaft mines opened after 1882 were each designated Mine No. 3 under government mine numbers. They were all located in a two-square-mile area on the east side of the riverbank. These mines were so close to the river they flooded often, and millions of litres of water had to be pumped out over the years. The coal from these mines was marketed in the four western provinces, and in the northwestern United States.

Between 1882, when Galt #1 Mine opened, and 1965 when the last one closed, the mines produced over 10,000,000 tonnes of coal. Small settlements grew near the entry ways to the mines, such as 'Number 3', later called the village of Stafford, and Hardieville, near Galt #6. Galt Mine #3 was located opposite the corner of 6th St. and 9th Ave. North, and Galt #6 was near present day Hardieville, where some remnants of the mine can still be seen. Over the years, these hamlets were absorbed by the city of Lethbridge.

The last mines carrying the name of Sir Alexander Tilloch Galt were Galt #8 which was owned by the CPR, and operated under the name of Lethbridge Collieries Ltd. from 1935 to 1957, (the remains of the tippie and the water tower are still visible on the city's western skyline), and the Shaughnessy Mine, 18 km north of Lethbridge, known as Galt #10, which closed in 1965. As mines were abandoned, the shafts were filled in and some of the mining equipment was put to other uses.



Miners on and around the shuttle train that transported them between Galt #3 and Galt #6 mines

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Relics of the past. Underground mine coal car (centre), and surface wagons, remnants of the area's coal mining years.

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