

From the Miners Memorial continue out Main Street (Rt. 664) for .1 mile to the Dennis Reedy Railroad and Coal Mine Museum which is on your left. The only coal company business building still remaining in Clinchco is across the street from the museum. This old building at one time or another housed a bank, barber shop, company offices, printing press, school rooms, mortuary, and post office.



**Old Clinchco Post Office**

From the museum go right and back to Rt. 83 where you will turn left. Go 4.4 miles to Fremont and turn left on Rt. 63 (Dante Mountain Road). You will pass through the town of McClure 1.6 miles on, which looks like a coal camp, but was actually a lumber camp built by the W. M. Ritter Lumber Company.

About a mile up Caney Creek from McClure is located the McClure 1 Mine. An explosion in this mine in 1983 took the lives of seven, and included the first woman miner killed in the state of Virginia. This mine is not visible from a public highway.

Continue on Rt. 63 for 9.4 miles to Trammel. Just before entering Trammel, notice the remains of some houses on both sides of the road. This was Haytertown, a small ten man coal operation run by Charlie Hayter in the 1920s. The town of Trammel was built by the Virginia Banner Coal Corporation and is the most intact coal camp still standing in Dickenson County, though in a sad state of repair. The store, superintendent's house, and boarding house are on your right with miners homes on both sides of the road.



**Old Trammel Company Store**

Continue on Rt. 63 for 2.9 miles to the top of Dante Mountain (the Dickenson—Russell County line) and drop off into Dante—2.2 miles. 1.1 miles down the mountain look for a mine opening and coal seam in the bank on the right of the road. At the foot of the mountain turn right on Rt. 627 (Lower Bear Wallow) and go .6 mile to the Dante Coal Mining and Railroad Museum which is on your right.

## **WELCOME TO THE DICKENSON COUNTY PORTION OF THE VIRGINIA COAL HERITAGE TRAIL**

Dickenson County was formed in 1880, the last county created in Virginia, hence it being called “the baby county” or “Virginia’s Baby.” The Carolina, Clinchfield, and Ohio Railway was completed through the county in 1915. Soon thereafter, between 1916 and 1920, several mining towns sprang up almost overnight, namely Bartlick, Splashdam, Haysi, Steinman, Clinchco, Wakenva, and Trammel.

The Dickenson County portion of the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail begins at the Breaks Interstate Park, where the Buchanan County portion ends. The Crooked Road, Virginia’s Heritage Music Trail, also begins/ends at the Breaks. The two Trails actually overlap from the Breaks to Fremont, a distance of nearly twenty miles.



At the Park Entrance turn off Rt. 80 onto Rt. 702 and go 1.1 miles to the Clinchfield Overlook which is on your left. From the overlook you can see the former Clinchfield Railroad, now a part of CSX, and the site of the old Domus Mine. The loading bin is visible beside the railroad and when the trees are void of leaves, remnants of the coal chute down the mountain can also be seen.



**Old Domus Mine Site**

While in the park it is well worth the time to visit the other overlooks and exhibits. The park museum, which can be seen on your right en route to the Clinchfield Overlook, features a coal mining display as well.

When leaving the park turn right onto Rt. 80 (Breaks Park Road). Don't miss the breathtaking scenery which soon comes into view on your right! Go 4 miles and just past Cherokee Lane, in the hollow on your left, you can see portions of an operating shaft mine. Continue 4.1 miles to downtown Haysi. In Haysi go straight onto Rt. 63 and continue through the center of town for .2 mile. Keep straight again onto Rt. 613 for 1.2 miles. The entrance to the old Splashdam Mine is in the edge of the road on your right. An explosion in this

mine in 1932 killed ten men. The Splash Dam Coal Seam can be seen at road level above and below the mine entry. A sizeable town once existed just beyond the railroad bridge, but now no trace of Splashdam remains. Coal loading docks for truck and strip mines could once be seen on both sides of the river as well.



**Splashdam Mine Opening**

Take Rts. 613 and 63 back through Haysi and turn right on Rt. 80/83. Go .3 mile and turn right again on Rt. 83 (Dickenson Highway). Immediately after crossing the Ireland Baker Bridge and Russell Fork River turn right on Rt. 693 (Bartley Street). The Coal Heritage Trail Museum is located in one of the three cabooses to your left.

Go back to Rt. 83, turn right, and go toward Clinchco. At 4.4 miles notice the bottom across the McClure River on your right. Here was located the coal mining town of Steinman, built by the Steinman Coal Corporation and later operated by the Ruth-Elkhorn Coal Corporation. There was a company store, school, boarding houses, tipples fed by bucket line from the mine, and several homes. As you can see, no sign of the old camp remains.

Continue 2.3 miles on to Clinchco, once the largest mining town in Dickenson County. Clinchco was constructed by the Clinchfield Coal Corporation and at the peak of operations contained some 285 houses, had a population of about 3500, and employed over 1500 men.

Just in front of the Clinchco Post Office you will see the Dickenson County Coal Miners Memorial which lists the names of 309 people who lost their lives in mine related accidents.



If you would like to walk around the toe of the hill (Graveyard Hill) across the street from the Miners Memorial, look behind the second house below the road (Adams Street) and you can see a bake oven where the Hungarians and Italians made bread. Two smaller beehive ovens are buried nearby. Their excavation would no doubt make for an interesting and rewarding archaeological dig!



**Dennis Reedy Railroad & Coal Mine Museum**