



HISTORIC INTRINSIC QUALITIES

“Historic quality encompasses legacies of the past that are distinctly associated with physical elements of the landscape, whether natural or manmade, that are of such historic significance that they educate the viewer and stir an appreciation of the past”
- America’s National Scenic Byway

As noted in Chapter 1, there is a rich coal history in Southwest Virginia which, in itself, sets it apart from other places in Virginia and across the world. In fact, prior to the 1880’s, southwest Virginia had few residents and even fewer communities. This was all to change with the American Industrial Revolution. Suddenly coal was in huge demand as an efficient yet cheap source of energy and the western coalfields of Virginia had lots of coal for the taking.

Coal Companies began opening mines which, in turn, needed an abundant supply of materials and workers. A network of railroads were built to deliver both as well as to bring the coal out of the mountains. As more workers arrived, housing was needed. These became known as coal camps which eventually became coal towns complete with a company store, theater, schools, libraries, restaurants, hotels, barber shops, hospitals, taxi service and more, often built, owned and operated by the coal companies themselves.

The coal boom peaked in the 1920’s during which hundreds of small coal camps and towns sprang up throughout the seven county area of Southwest Virginia. Over the years, as new technology made it possible to mine coal with less manual labor and as many coal mines were shut down, so too did the towns. But there are many historic reminders of the coal days of southwest Virginia as one travels the Virginia Coal Heritage Trail. In fact, there are 23 historic sites along the trail that have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Nearly all have some connection to coal.

SITES LISTED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES					
Location	Name of Property	USGS Quad Map	VLR	NRHP	FILE #
City of Norton	Hotel Norton	Norton	12/5/2001	5/16/2002	146-0005
Buchanan County	Buchanan County Courthouse	Grundy	7/20/1982	9/16/1982	229-0001
Buchanan County	Whitewood School	Jewell Ridge	6/19/2008	9/12/2008	013-5125
Lee County	Keokee Store No. 1	Keokee	3/7/2007	4/30/2007	052-0066
Russell County	Russell County Courthouse	<i>State Website</i>			
Scott County	Flanary Archaeological Site	Dungannon	9/16/1982	7/7/1983	084-0003
Scott County	Bush Mill	Dungannon	6/19/2008	9/5/2008	084-5151
Scott County	Dungannon Depot	Dungannon	3/18/2010	Finalized	21-0001
Tazewell County	Indian Paintings	Pounding Mill	5/13/1969	12/2/1969	092-0007
Tazewell County	Pocahontas Historic District	Bramwell	3/21/1972	11/3/1972	092-0011
Tazewell County	Pocahontas Exhibition Coal Mine & Museum	<i>State Website</i>			
Wise County	Derby Historic District	Appalachia	9/10/2003	1/16/2004	097-0048
Wise County	Stonega Historic District	Appalachia	9/10/2003	1/16/2004	097-0042
Wise County	June Tolliver House	Big Stone Gap	7/17/1973	8/28/1973	101-0003
Wise County	John Fox, Jr. House	Big Stone Gap	11/20/1973	6/7/1974	101-0001



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Wise County	U.S. Post Office and Courthouse	Big Stone Gap	10/21/1975	12/23/1975	101-0004
Wise County	Christ Episcopal Church	Big Stone Gap	4/18/1989	12/19/1990	101-0005
Wise County	Southwest Virginia Museum Historical State Park	Big Stone Gap	9/11/2002	11/22/2002	101-0002
Wise County	Terrace Park Girl Scout Cabin	Big Stone Gap	9/5/2007	11/1/2007	101-0046
Wise County	Country Cabin	Norton	4/22/1992	10/27/1992	097-0059
Wise County	Kelly View School	Norton	6/8/2006	8/30/2006	097-0308
Wise County	Virginia City Church	Virginia City	9/14/2005	11/16/2005	097-0192
Wise County	Tacoma School	Wise	7/2/1997	9/12/1997	097-0001

There are many other sites of historic significance along the 325 miles including, but not limited to, coal camps, company stores, tipples, historic homes and depots. A few are highlighted below and on the following page. *A more in-depth list is provided in APPENDIX C: Historic Sites and Resources which includes a description and contact information.*

Interpreted Historic Sites, Structures as well as Museums in Historic Buildings along the Route.



Pocahontas Exhibition Mine



Dante Coal & Railroad Museum



Pocahontas Coal Museum



Crab Orchard Museum & collection of historic buildings



101 Rail Car



Southwest Virginia Museum

Please note: These are only the few obvious ones along the route, all of which provide interpretive information. Further exploration will show that there are many more which could be noted, and in many cases, interpreted.

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A few of the many sites along the route which need interpretation:



Keokee Power Plant became a Theater



Splashdam #6 Mine Site



Jewell Ridge Coal Company Offices



Pocahontas Coal Offices



The many coal camps along route



Freight Depot in Appalachia

YESTERDAY AND TODAY



There are a couple of locations along the route in which both the past and the present can be told...

- There is an interesting story to be told about the Virginia City Presbyterian Church, circa 1890, which has been moved numerous times before ending up approximately in its original location. It is now located next to the Dominion Coal Energy Plant currently under construction.



- Tom's Creek, once one of the largest coal mining communities and cultural center for the region, is located next to an active coal extraction site which provides an excellent opportunity to tell about both the past and the present.



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And Buchanan County has a number of examples of both past and present coal operations including, but not limited to, Island Creek Coal Company which was once an active site which is located next to Jewell Smokeless Coke operations. They also have some excellent examples of coal reclamation sites being used for other purposes.



Island Creek Coal Co.



Jewell Smokeless Coke



Apollo Mine Operation



Mountain Top 9-hole Golf Course



Commercial & recreation development on top of mountain overlooking Grundy.

There are other sites all along the 324 mile scenic byway which need interpretation, preservation and/or protection. This includes sites relating to the railroad due to the important role the train played in the development of the area and as a primary means of transportation in the region. Through the efforts of the Virginia Coal Heritage Advisory Committee and the communities, the corridor management plan is already creating greater awareness and appreciation for these historic sites and structures and efforts are being made to ensure these sites still remain for future generations to see.

Some of the primary historic-related themes that have surfaced that best identifies the corridor include, but are not limited to:

- Coal Camps,
- Company Stores and other “company owned” buildings,
- Coal Mines (both active and nonactive),
- Reclamation sites,
- Depots, section houses and other railroad related structures,
- Rail cars,
- The unique architecture due to the influx of immigrants all over the world,
- Memorials to the miners,
- Coal and railroad equipment used in or around the mines,
- The numerous churches and unique building structures,
- The strikes and labor unions which were so much a part of the history of the mines.

During the process of developing an interpretive plan for the byway, additional themes will surface.