Number 10

Located in South Wellington, the Number 10 mine was owned and operated by Canadian Collieries (Dunsmuir) Ltd. from 1937-1952 and employed around 200 underground and 35 surface crewmen at a time who extracted more than 2.5 million tons of coal over the mine's lifetime. The mine ran on compressed air rather than electricity, used winches instead of mules, and had a 38 motion engine for pulling cars up, making it more modern than Number One.

There were no serious accidents during the operation of Number 10. Tunnels were sloped towards the Nanaimo River, resulting in frequent flooding and several mine car accidents every year. Working in certain parts of the mine exposed workers to sulphur which reportedly irritated the eyes of workers to the point of temporary blindness. As well, there was a lot of gas within the mine and not enough ventilation which on one occasion caused the deaths of three miners when a spark ignited the gas. In 1950, Number 10 won the John T. Ryan Regional Safety Award for the coal mine with the lowest accident rate of the year.

Number 10 saw two non-violent strikes in its thirteen years of production: once for food during the Second World War which resulted in an extra ration of bologna, and another for higher wages which was supplied with a slight rise in the price of coal.

Alexandria

The Alexandra mine was named after the princess of Wales, however, the mine went on to have many names during its operation including Alexandria, Alexander, and South Wellington. Alexandra mine was part of a series of mines called the “Black Track Mines” that were all located in the same area. James Beck had purchased the mineral rights for the land and held them from 1879-1882 before he sold them to Dunsmuir, Diggle and company; later called Canadian Collieries Dunsmuir ltd. It wasn’t until CCD ltd. purchased the mineral rights that the land had begun to be mined in 1884. The Alexandra mine had to stop mining multiple times during its operation due to lack of labour and lack of supplies. In 1897 the mine has record of only 30 employees working in the mine. One year later in 1898, the Alexandra mine had 239 workers, 120 of which worked underground. This jump in numbers is due to the increased demand for labour after the mine completed its above-ground improvements; the mine began to ship coal to Comox to be used in the production of coke and Alexandra mine was also responsible for washing the nut coal brought in from the Extension mine with their coal washery. The mine was shut down in 1902 where the mine remained idle until 1929. The water in the Alexandra mine was drained into mine No. 5 so that the Alexandra mine could become accessible. The mine closed in 1935 when it had run out of coal.
Bibliography


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Pictures: Both Pictures were found in Lynne Bowen’s book “Three Dollar Dream”