

A Trip Through Historic

Company owner's home



Photograph

Dominic



Miner's home

A brief history

Eckley is one of hundreds of mining "patches" developed in the anthracite region in the nineteenth century.

In 1854, Sharpe, Weiss and Company bought the land from the Tench Coxe estate and began to develop Council Ridge Colliery and the village of Eckley. The village, built near the colliery where the coal was mined and processed, provided housing for the miners and their families. Its stores, schools and churches met the economic, social and religious needs of the community. This also gave the company greater control over the miners.

After 1874, when Sharpe and Weiss's lease with the Coxes either expired or they leased it and Eckley to other coal companies, the Coxe estate sold its holdings, including Eckley, to the Huss family. The village was separated from the Coxe estate interests in 1969 when Huss sold Eckley to the Anthracite Historic Site Museum, Inc., a group of Hazleton Area businessmen; they, in turn, sold it to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In 1970, Beltrami acquired the land around Eckley and continued to mine the coal first exploited by Weiss and Company.

During this period other changes took place. Eckley passed successive waves of immigration, offering economic opportunities and religious freedom. English, Welsh and German immigrants were supplemented by Irish and then southern European immigrants. These formed an ethnic mix throughout the anthracite region.

At the same time, strip mining, began to gradually replace underground mining. The Eckley and part of the village were strip mined. The work force at the colliery and the population, which numbered fifteen hundred people, declined. By 1970, only a hundred people remained.

Council Ridge Colliery has disappeared but Eckley remains on. A company town until its acquisition by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, it preserves a way of life which dominated the region for over 140 years.

St. James
Episcopal Church
(1859)

