

Railroads

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horses too," he said.

Lehigh Valley Coal charged them \$1.01 per ton to ship the product in on its own railroad, Reese recalled. When the prices increased during the Depression, the Reeses stopped rail shipments and had the coal brought in on trucks to sell to retail accounts. Three 100-lb. bags of coal cost \$1 then.

The railroads also brought feed in 100-lb. sacks to the Brown and Fassett feed mill and gasoline and oil to Pen Fern Oil, Reese said.

"I also worked at the feed mill, but I was just a little fellow then and too small to throw the feed sacks," he said.

Reese enjoyed watching the horses and mules being unloaded at the Dallas siding, where they stayed in a corral for a short time.

"There was quite a crowd at the corral," he said. "I think Mr. Bulford bought the animals and sold them from his farm."

His grandfather, Jay M. Reese, had a hardware store on Main Street in Dallas, which also sold bags of coal.

"That coal was sold before it even got here on the train," he said. The hardware store was later replaced by a building now occupied by Mellon Bank.

The railroad suffered a death by inches, with the end of the ice industry in the late 1940's, the closing of the Alderson station in 1958 and the elimination of passenger service to the Back Mountain in 1961.

By September, 1963, the entire line was closed.

Abandoned railroad lines are now being revitalized by groups interested in preserving them as hiking and biking trails. The first two miles of trail, between Luzerne and Carverton Road, will eventually extend to Dushore has been set up by the Anthracite Scenic Trails Association.

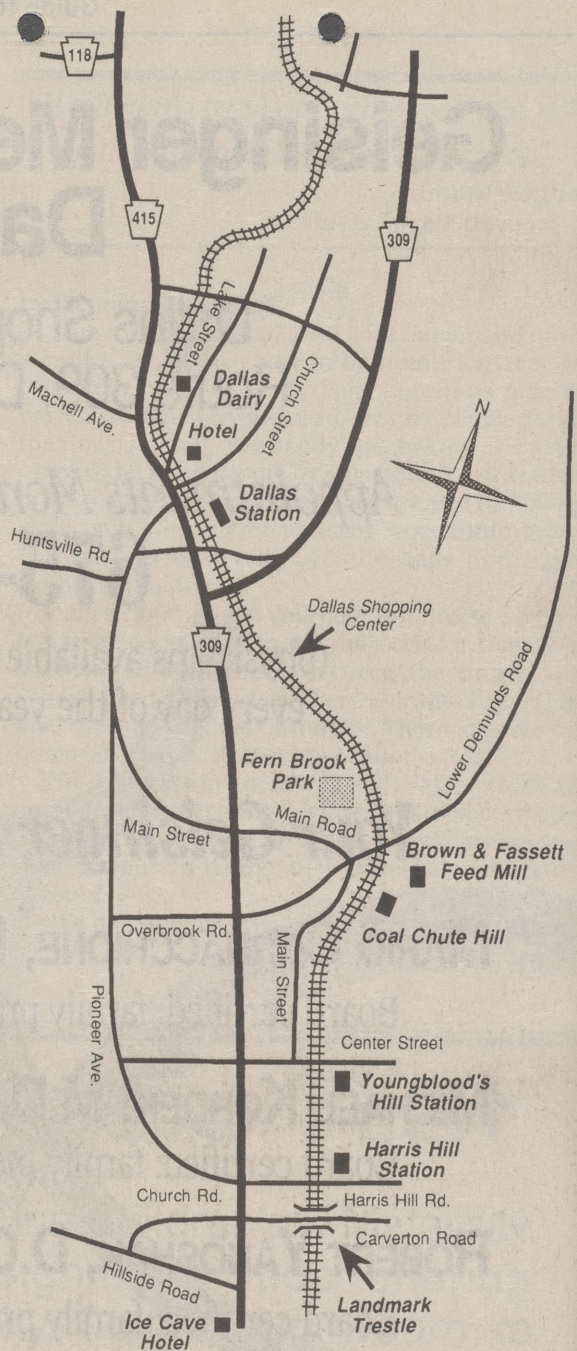
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Railroad dates

An important part of the life of the Back Mountain for 70 years, railroads are today just a memory.

Important railroading dates in the Back Mountain:

- December 6, 1886: The first locomotive reached Dallas on the new line.
- 1891: The Alderson Depot was built.
- 1891: A short line from Alderson Station to the Lehigh Valley picnic grounds was built. The picnic grounds was later developed into an amusement park and acquired by the Hanson family. The roller coaster's crossing over the tracks has been preserved as an archway over the entrance.
- 1893: The final 79-mile link between Noxen and Bean Run was opened, giving direct rail service between Wilkes-Barre and Towanda. Called the Bowman's Creek branch of the Lehigh Valley Railroad, it had its own telegraph lines.



- 1909: The Lehigh Valley ran a daily excursion train to the picnic grounds at Harveys Lake.
- 1914: When the mountains were denuded of timber, the Alderson sawmill closed. Only ice trains used the tracks afterwards.
- 1934: Freight and passenger service were combined and passenger service to Harveys Lake was eliminated.
- 1958: The Alderson Depot was closed.
- 1961: All passenger service was eliminated. The Noxen tannery, the town's main industry, was closed.
- July, 1963: The line between Dallas and Noxen was abandoned.
- September, 1963: The rest of the line between Dallas and Luzerne was abandoned.

Material for this article is from Charles Petrillo's books *A History of Harveys Lake* and *Ghost Towns of North Mountain*.