

Discovery of Coal and Growth of the Coal Industry

Discovery of coal veins within North Dakota led to a growing mining industry. Coal was an important fuel for steamboats and railroads, and it continues to be used today. This pathfinder will lead researchers to several resources available at the North Dakota State Archives highlighting the growth of the coal industry in North Dakota.

Archival Collections

10268 Hansen Evesmith Collection

Consists of Zenith Coal Company daily reports concerning shipments and receipts and disbursements for a coal mine, records of the Scoria Construction Company, correspondence, notes, coal mine blueprint and information, reports on the lignite industry, photos, information about Belfield, Fryburg, Scoria and Zenith (N.D.), and newspaper clippings. Also includes correspondence and newspaper clippings concerning procurement of North Dakota stone for the Washington Monument. Industrial engineer, coal mine explorer and developer, founder of the Zenith Coal Company.

10274 North Dakota Farmers Union Records

News releases, speeches, committee reports, printed material, biographies of union officers, and records relating to the educational and cooperative Union of America.

10524 Walter P. Macomber

Telegrams from various individuals regarding the 1919 miners' strike, lists of salaries and wages at Washburn Lignite Coal Company, a list of stockholders, notice to creditors regarding the action if the Governor were to take over the mines, a copy of the text to John L. Lewis canceling the strike, letters, and articles.

10553 Frank E. Vyzralek Collection

Box 20, Folder 1; Box 57, Folders 10, 11

The collection includes the research files, personal papers, photographs and audiovisual materials of lifelong researcher and former North Dakota State Archivist Frank Edward Vyzralek. The research files include original work and information compiled about agriculture, arts and entertainment, business and industry, city and town life, education, ethnicity, Indians of North America, history, military, people, places, politics and government, religion and transportation.

Useful Search Guidance

Subjects

- Lignite
- Underground mines
- Surface mining
- Coal gasification
- Washburn Lignite Coal Company
- Coal Strike of 1919
- Public utilities--North Dakota
- Coal mines and mining--North Dakota
- Electric utilities--North Dakota
- Coal Impact Project; Intergovernmental fiscal relations--North Dakota

People

- General William Washburn, 1831-1912

Locations

- Freedom Mine
- Red Star Coal Mine
- Herman Hansen mine

Journal Articles

Coal and Coal Shales: A Paleontological View
Bruce R. Erickson— *North Dakota History* Vol. 41 Issue 3

The Washburn Lignite Coal Company: A History of Mining at Wilton, North Dakota
Frances Wold – *North Dakota History* Vol. 43 Issue 4

Howard E. and Francis Winzenburg—Lignite
Larry J. Sprunk – *North Dakota History* Vol. 44 Issue 4

10692 Robert L. Stroup Papers

Files of the Energy Development Board, coal mining reclamation issues and resolutions, files relating to Stroup's service in the North Dakota Legislature, aerial photos of coal mine activity, and an oral history with Mr. Stroup.

10724 Darrell Dorgan Papers

The collection contains a compilation of historical files, scripts from Bismarck (N.D.) radio and television broadcasting stations, video interviews with a variety of North Dakota men, and reports on popular social issues including the environment, energy, MX missile system, school certification, synthetic fuels, taxes, Sitting Bull, and the potato sale.

11271 Jerry Masters and William (Bill) Bursack Papers

Drafts and research on railroads for the manuscript "The Northern Pacific before the Last Spike: Locating the Route."

11345 Merry Helm Papers, Box 1, Folder 7

Helm's research for her Dakota Datebook stories, primarily from newspapers and other published sources. Includes notable statewide people, crimes, and stories, as well as a chronology of North Dakota history, beginning in 9500 B.C.

11366 50 Years in the Saddle Club Collection

Research and organizational files of the 50 Years in the Saddle Club (Watford City, N.D.). The collection documents biographies and stories of ranchers and other residents of western North Dakota. The organization published the Series: *50 Years in the Saddle: Looking Back Down the Trail*.

20523 George L. Johnson

Photocopy of a brief history of coal mining and other early history in the Burlington area.

20579 Missouri Slope Coal Company Records (Sims, North Dakota)

Ledger covering the years 1889-1893.

30905 Workmen's Compensation Bureau. State Mine Inspection Dept., Coal Mine Maps

Maps created to show the underground extent and legal land description of every commercial coal mine in the state.

31288 Energy Development Impact Office. Federal and State Coal Advisory Board Records.

Energy Development Impact Office. Federal/State Coal Advisory Board Records. Records consist of minutes, correspondence, regulations, maps, and personnel directories relating to management of the federal coal management program and the federal shale oil program. CORRESPONDENCE, GENERAL correspondence from industry, federal and state agencies.

31289 Energy Development Impact Office. Fort Union Regional Coal Team Records.

Energy Development Impact Office. Fort Union Regional Coal Team Records. Records consist of minutes, correspondence, reports, regulations, maps, and personnel directories relating to management of the federal coal management program. FEDERAL/STATE COAL ADVISORY BOARD & FORT UNION REGIONAL COAL TEAM MEETING MATERIALS, correspondence from the above two boards and correspondence from our office to these two boards on meetings and upcoming or past coal lease sales.

31338 Public Service Commission. Reclamation Division, Coal Mine Applications

Series consists of coal mine applications and other documents of Baukol-Noonan, Inc.

31365 Management and Budget, Office of. Intergovernmental Assistance, Coal Impact Project Grant Files.

Management and Budget, Office of Office of Intergovernmental Assistance Coal Impact Project Grant Files. Series consists of subject files, correspondence, reports, and coal company files. Series documents studies of the use of lignite feasibility and affect of establishment of coal gasification and electrical generation facilities in North Dakota.

31820 Trust Lands. Minerals Division, Investigation of School Lands for Coal

Classifies land as "Coal Land" or "Not Coal Land". Investigation for Burke, Burleigh, Divide, Dunn, McLean, Mercer, Morton, Mountrail, Oliver, Sheridan, Stark and Williams counties.

31929 Economic Development Commission. Coal development research file.

Tax Department. Coal development research file, 1970-1973. .25 ft.

31941 Land Department, North Dakota State Mineral Division Coal and Energy Development Files

Contains slide show presentations (slides, cassette tapes and scripts) and loose slides of coal and energy development and reclamation created by the Coal Development Impact Office and Energy Development Impact Office.

31944 Transportation, Department of. Coal Impact Correspondence

Transportation, Department. Office of Transportation. Coal Impact Correspondence, 1971-1979.

31970 Legislative Council. Fort Union Regional Task Force and Coal Conference File

Legislative Council. Fort Union Regional Task Force and Coal Conference Files. Inventory available.

32319 Tax Department. Coal Conversion Facilities and Coal Severance Tax Reports

Contains coal conversion facilities tax reports including supporting documents and correspondence. Monthly report to generation of power plants subject to coal conversion facilities privilege tax, tax due thereon, correspondence concerning errors found during audit, occasional amended reports.

Books

The Coal Creek Station

1990 – United Power Association
21 pages, color illustrations
Call Number: 333.7932 C652

Coal and Sugar Beets in North Dakota

1891 – E. J. Babcock
Call Number: 333.822 B114

Archaeological and Historical Studies for a Proposed coal Gasification Complex, Dunn County, North Dakota

1976 – Lawrence Loendorf, Alan Carmichael, David Miller
Call Number: 333.9 Un3 19

A Coal Mining Legacy: Artifacts Found at the Washburn Lignite Coal Mining Towns of Chapin and Langehorne, North Dakota: Summer of 2017

2018—Andrew W. Peterson
Call Number: 622.19 P485c

The Square Buttes Coal Field, Oliver and Mercer Counties, North Dakota

1959 – William D. Johnson, Jr. and Robert P. Kunkel
Call Number: I 19.3:1076

Geology and Coal Resources of the Minot Region, North Dakota

1939—David A. Andrews
Call Number: I 19.3:906-B

Lignite Resources of North Dakota

1953—Russell A. Brant
Call Number: I 19.4/2:226

Online Resources

[Coal Mining in the Coal-Bearing Region of North Dakota, 1870-1945](#)

Jeffrey A. Hess, Robert Hybben, and William Casey Hess, Roise and Company – State Historical Society of North Dakota website

[SHSND Photobook](#)

State Historical Society of North Dakota's Online Search Portal for all digitized photographs

[Digital Horizons](#)

Online consortium of historic photographs from the collections of the State Historical Society of North Dakota

[WorldCat](#)

State Historical Society of North Dakota's publication search portal

External Resources

[Mineral Resources of North Dakota: Coal](#)

North Dakota Geological Survey information on the North Dakota state website

[Center Coal Co.](#)

Current website for the Center Coal Co.

State Archives

For more information related to the collections and resources available at the North Dakota State Archives, please email archives@nd.gov or call (701) 328-2668.



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