

Straw is placed over the wood and then clay to the depth of three or four inches. Some small holes are left about the bottom to be used in drawing the fire to the outside of the pit. The fire is started in the square opening in the centre. It usually takes about ten days to char the wood. When the pit is burned, which is known by its emitting no smoke and its shrinking to one third its original size, the charcoal is drawn out with an iron rake in ridges about the sides and allowed to cool off. A pit about the size described, containing four cords, would produce about one hundred bushels of charcoal.

In burning these pits care must be taken that the fire does not break through the clay; if this should happen during the night or when a close watch is not kept, one is liable to have the pit destroyed. My first experience resulted in this mishap. My brother and myself, two very small boys to engage in such an undertaking, decided to build a charcoal pit and after much labor and excitement it was ready for the torch. Everything progressed nicely for a time but an unfortunate delay one night in visiting the pit lost for us about all the net proceeds which we had so confidently reckoned on. This was the first and last time we tried charcoal burning on our own responsibility. I believe we did try another miniature pit, made of hemlock knots, but this failure of our first venture seemed to destroy the taste for much experimenting along that line of industry.

My next attempt was in partnership with a practised hand, after I had grown larger in experience and stature, and we succeeded in making a corner in charcoal. This fact I think is not generally known so I hope we are in no way responsible for the gigantic corners and combines of these latter days, in coal and other things.

It happened in this way. A gentleman from Rustico, Mr Horton, and myself were the only dealers in charcoal to my