

and the first pit reached the coal in February, 1828. The plans show that eight pits were sunk in working this section of the seam, the deepest being 199 feet. The coal worked extended from the river along the crop for a distance of 1,300 yards and a width of 175 yards or over, about 48 acres.

On December 29th, 1832, the coal was found to be on fire in these pits, and fourteen horses were burned to death. As the coal was found to have been on fire at widely separated points incendiarism was suspected. This view was confirmed by an investigation held on behalf of the government by Mr. C. R. Fairbanks, but the guilty parties were never discovered. It was believed that the fires had been started by persons who considered themselves aggrieved by the action of the government in granting the lease to the company instead of to local parties. The pits were closed and water let in, and after nine months of pumping work was resumed. The expense of pumping and loss of material by this fire was estimated at \$6,000.

In 1837 an explosion of gas occurred at the east face of the workings by which three men were killed, and work interrupted for six months. In 1839 a more serious explosion occurred by which forty horses were killed. The loss by this fire was estimated at \$25,000. This section of workings was then abandoned and allowed to fill with water up to the level of the river, but the fires continued to burn for several years in the upper workings. Prior to this, however, it had been decided that as the coal at each extremity of the workings had deteriorated fresh and deeper pits were needed.

The company starting its operations in 1827 began in what may be called a wilderness. It is true that the district was well settled and produced easily enough to support its population, but at that day the engineering development of the province showed little beyond a blacksmith's shop. They were compelled to build foundries, machine and repair shops, etc., in fact a self-supporting establishment. The first preliminary appears to have been a brickyard which was continued for a number of years. The foundry appears to have received much attention, and it had a chain factory added to it, but the cost of labour led to the early abandoning of the latter.

A small blast furnace was built and an attempt made to smelt iron ores brought down from Bridgeville, a few miles up the river. The experiment proved a failure, as the man brought out from England to take charge of the furnace was accustomed to smelting ores softer and more easily reduced than those they selected.

The brickyard furnished a large supply of material for engine houses, residences, etc., but the imported prejudice against wood as a building material must have proved an unnecessary expense.