

WASHINGTON'S COAL FIELDS.

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The first discovery of coal in the territory now included in the state of Washington was made in the Cowlitz valley, in Lewis county, in the year 1848. The discovery was of no great value, as the coal was a lignite of rather low grade. Four years later coal was discovered in Thurston county; also on Bellingham bay, Whatcom county, where the first coal mine in Washington was opened. This mine was operated from 1852 to 1878, when it was abandoned on account of fire generated by spontaneous combustion.

In the United States census reports of 1880 is found the first records of coal production in Washington territory, the amount being given as 5,374 short tons. The Bellingham bay mine, which produced this, was operated by a California company, of which P. B. Cornwall was the chief stockholder. This company operated mines in California and later in Black Diamond, King county.

In 1859 coal was first discovered in King county, near Issaquah, and soon afterward Newcastle became a coal-producing camp. At that time the coal was hauled by teams from Newcastle to Lake Washington, where it was loaded on scows, which were towed to a dock near where Leschi Park is now situated, and from there it was hauled into Seattle.

Shipments of coal from Seattle to supply the California market began in 1871, and about this time the mines at Renton and Talbot were opened. In 1877 the Seattle & Walla Walla railroad, now the Columbia & Puget Sound, was built from Seattle to Renton and was soon extended to Newcastle.

In 1875 work was begun in the Pierce county field, but was soon abandoned, to be resumed in the early '80's, when Washington rapidly forged ahead as a coal producer. It was between 1880 and 1885 that the Green River field, the Roslyn and Pierce county coal areas began to be developed. Between 1880 and 1890 the coal production increased from 14,015 to 1,263,689 short tons, an increase of nearly 800 per cent.

Four Coal Fields in the State.

The coal fields of Washington lie almost entirely in the central and western parts of the state. They are four in number: The North Puget Sound field, including the counties of Whatcom and Skagit; the South Puget Sound field, including the counties of King and Pierce; the Southwestern field, including Thurston, Lewis and Cowlitz counties, and the Roslyn field, in Kittitas county, east of the Cascade mountains.

Among the coal-producing states, Washington ranks sixteenth in the tonnage and seventeenth in value. In 1903 our production reached its high-water mark, when 3,193,273 tons were produced, valued at over \$5,000,000. The years 1904 and 1905 witnessed a decreased production due to the discovery of oil in California and its extensive use

for the generation of steam. But with the data available to date, the year 1906 will show a large gain over 1905, and will probably far exceed the production of 1903.

Five Thousand Men Employed.

There are in the coal mines of the state over 5,000 men, who are employed on an average over 230 days each year. This compares well with the number of days worked by the average wage earner. The wages of mine workers vary with the character of the work. Miners, doing company work, earn \$3 a day, while on contract work they earn from \$3.50 to \$5, and even \$6, per day of eight hours. Engineers earn from \$2.50 to \$3 per day; electricians from \$3 to \$3.50; machinists, \$3 to \$5, and laborers, \$1.75 to \$2.50.

The coal mining towns of the state contain a population of at least 25,000, a large proportion of which are foreign born—the Italian, Austrian and Finnish nationalities being strongly represented. The steadiness of employment in and about the mines makes the coal mining towns strongly home communities. Music is much in evidence, and pianos and other musical instruments are found in the majority of homes. The public schools are well attended. In many of the towns the miners supplement the state funds with private contributions for school support.

Churches are numerous and well attended, and in nearly all of the mining towns halls have been built in which public meetings and social gatherings are held. The miner is a fraternal being, and Masonry, Odd Fellowship, Pythianism and other fraternal organizations flourish, perhaps, more than among other classes.

Output for Five Years.

The output of the Washington coal mines for the last five years is as follows:

1901—Tons, 2,578,218; value, \$4,271,076.
1902—Tons, 2,681,214; value, \$4,572,295.
1903—Tons, 3,193,273; value, \$5,380,679.
1904—Tons, 3,137,681; value, \$5,120,931.
1905—Tons, 2,864,926; value, \$5,141,258.

NEGRO IN CENTRALIA.

Centralia is one of the principal cities in Lewis County, which is in the southwestern part of the state, has but a few Negroes therein, but those few are among the oldest and most respected citizens. Lumbering is the chief industry of the county, while horticulture, dairying and fruit raising are extensively carried on. It was in this county that the well known "old timer," George Washington, lived. He was one of the two Negroes who were granted permission to locate government land in the state (then territory), by a special act of Congress. Mr. Washington died a few years ago, leaving an estate that is estimated to be worth between \$40,000 and \$50,000. Among the others who are residents we find Mrs. Jane E. Bryant, with real estate valued at \$20,000. Mrs. Bryant died a few days ago. Stacy Cooness, \$5,000; A. A. Miller, whose real estate possessions are valued at \$15,000. There are a few more families in the county, but these are fair samples of what the Negro is doing in that part of the state.