

considerable expense and actually brought out some coal. In 1868, however, the stockholders failed to meet their obligations. Had the money which was spent on building the road been invested in providing transportation from the Newcastle mine to Seattle, history might have been different, and the mines might have remained in the hands of Seattle owners. But this was not done, and \$40,000 was quickly spent and lost.

The Lake Washington Coal Company, meanwhile, attempted to bring San Francisco capital into the firm. A young mining engineer, T.A. Blake, came to Newcastle to examine and evaluate the coal fields. He wrote an optimistic report, but his "backers" decided not to compete with San Francisco coal, and let the option drop. Blake's gentlemen were misguided. His report was quite correct and very farsighted:

It would appear that the property as a whole is one whose development will form an important step in the history of our productive interests. It is somewhat inconveniently located, demanding both water and land transportation before the delivery of the coal at a favorable shipping-point. However, its favorable situation and surrounding for inexpensive MINING, together with the superior quality and great quantity of the coal, more than compensate for the other disadvantages of its location...The lower one ALONE of these three beds will probably furnish a greater mass of GOOD COAL in a given length and breadth than any mine yet worked on the Pacific Coast of North America....It is certain, then, that the facts at present warrant, and we believe that developments in the future will justify, the probabilities as stated above. And if there be the case, it will not be easy to over-estimate the future importance of the Seattle coal field to the commercial and productive interests of the Pacific Coast; notwithstanding the heavy outlay which will be required to open the mines upon a proper scale, and to put the coal in the market.

Because San Francisco lost interest, the report was filed but never published, and the Seattle people were left to continue on their own.

The Seattle Coal Company was organized and incorporated on February 1, 1870. In conjunction with it the Seattle Coal and Transportation Company was formed for the purpose of delivering the output from Newcastle to the ships on Elliott Bay. This group bought out the interest of the old Lake Washington Coal Company, acquiring thereby 480 acres of land. They retained two of the original stockholders, George F. Whitworth and C.B. Bagley, added seven new stockholders, and issued 10,000 shares of stock.

The Seattle Coal and Transportation Company immediately set about to improve transportation facilities. In 1871 it laid track from the mine to Murphy's Landing on Lake Washington. Here the coal was loaded on scows and taken through the slough at the southern end of the Lake into the Black River, then by way of the Duwamish

River to Seattle. About \$25,000 was spent on the project. By May, 1872, the railroad ran from the mine all the way to deep water, reducing appreciably the cost of handling great quantities of coal.

In September, 1872, there were sixty men employed at the mine and fifteen in transportation. The company was operating 92 cars, and more were delivered daily. The company had constructed 25 houses and was preparing to increase output at the mine. Newcastle began to "rumble".

At this time Seattle was making a determined effort to establish rail communication with the east. The Northern Pacific had chosen Tacoma as its Western terminus. Seattle interests organized their own railway and by March 7, 1877, had laid the rails as far as Renton. With the personal financial backing of James M. Colman, superintendent, the Seattle and Walla Walla Railroad, as it was called, reached Newcastle within the year. On February 5, 1878, the railroad reached the mine, and on that day fifty tons of coal were brought to town. The railroad ran four locomotives and fifty coal cars, moved from 400 to 800 tons of coal a day, carried the mail, and secured a large traffic.

In 1877 Watson A. Goodyear described the mines as follows:

They were, both of them, beautiful beds to work. Their thickness was good; their dip was right; their roof and floors good; there were no faults; their coal itself was good and hard and clean; there was no pumping nor hoisting, and hardly any timbering was needed. How much everyone of these items means in its bearings on the unavoidable cost of mining, will be best understood by those who have had most experience in working beds of a different character, such, for example, as those of the Mt. Diablo mines. But since the union of the two in one clean, solid bed eleven feet in thickness, the conditions for cheap mining are even more favorable than they were before, and there is not, today, a coal mine in North America, west of the Rocky Mountains, which for cheapness of mining can compare with this magnificent bed.

It was a common experience to say, "The roof is almost like steel". Acres of the mine were developed without the use of a prop, pillar, or any support. The slope was extended 2,000 feet down to a level 300 feet below sea level. The coal was of the highest grade lignite. The lump coal was used for domestic purposes; it kindled easily, made a hot fire, and was almost as clean to handle as wood. The export coal was compact, flinty and very firm; it had a bright luster and a good fracture and was easily adaptable to steam use. One ship captain complained that the coal was so hot that it burned his ship's boilers up; this statement much delighted the coal company. Volume of production was high; of the 790,639 tons of coal mined in the region during the first ten years, 733,794 tons came from Newcastle, 33,419 tons from the Renton mines, and 23,426 tons from the Talbot mine.

Newcastle was a busy town by the mid-1870's. Life there is depicted by John McKnight in a letter to his young wife in Oregon who was waiting for him to find a job and a place to live in Newcastle.