

## MEMORIALS TO THE MINE MULES OF PENNSYLVANIA

BY EVE IVERSON

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Coal mining is a dangerous and physically demanding job. For many years men and mules faced the hazards of the underground work as a team. Through their efforts the fuel of the American industrial revolution was drawn from the mountains of Pennsylvania. In the cities of Ashland and Scranton you can visit mines and museums that preserve the heritage of "the rock that burns."

There are two main types of coal. Bituminous coal is brown in color and comparatively soft. It is found throughout the world. Anthracite is black, hard, more rare and more valuable. Anthracite burns hotter and more slowly than bituminous coal and produces less pollution. Consequently, anthracite was pursued underground into the Appalachian Mountains with a nearly religious fervor.

At the turn of the century newly arrived immigrants found ready work

in the mines. They also discovered that in the eyes of the mine owners they were less valuable than the mules they labored with. There was no worker's compensation or unemployment to help miners when they were injured in the coal fields. Another person was hired to take their place before the dust had settled at their mining station. By comparison, the mules were expensive and required training and experience to do their jobs properly. They were hard to replace, and woe to the miner who injured one in frustration!

I wanted to find out how mules were employed in underground work so I traveled to the famous mining regions in the Appalachian Mountains of Pennsylvania. I have found many articles in various mining journals that describe how animals were trained, fed and housed inside the mines. I am currently working on a bibliography which will give interested longeared enthusiasts an opportunity to discover a new aspect of the mule at work.

The city of Ashland is in the

