

*A History of Tallmadge Coal:
A Tale of Woodchucks, Welshmen,
and a Canal*



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Canal*

By

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*Dedicated to those members of the Davis, Roberts, and Thomas families who came from
Wales to Tallmadge to mine its coal and leave their mark.*

Of Mines and Miners

This effort was fueled by a desire to do two things. First, I hoped to gather together in one place as much information about the Tallmadge, Ohio coal industry as possible in an attempt to provide a detailed record of this part of Tallmadge's past. While research indicated much information was available, it also became obvious that a comprehensive study of the industry had apparently not yet been assembled. Prompted by questions regarding the locations of mines within the original township as well as the approach of the Tallmadge Bicentennial in 2007, I saw an opportunity to provide what I hope is a significant account of this portion of Tallmadge history.

My second motivation was purely personal: I wanted to find a way to honor the many Welshmen - some of whom were my ancestors - who had emigrated from Wales to Tallmadge to work in those mines. What I found was a whole community of Welshmen who not only labored in the mines but also built churches, held festivals, opened businesses, fought in wars, and generally embraced their new home.

It is my hope that this volume succeeds in both areas without becoming a personal chronicle so it can be of value both to those wishing to learn more about the Tallmadge coal mines as well as those whose interest might lie with the Welshmen of Tallmadge.

A special thank you is due the marvelous staff in the Special Collections Division of the Akron-Summit County Public Library. These wonderful folks bent over backwards to locate materials and provide access to them during the research process...then they went beyond the call of duty and offered suggestions for revisions to early drafts. Without Judy, Jo, Mike, and Mary, this little project would probably never have gotten off the ground. Likewise, a special note of gratitude is due Karen Wiper, Head Librarian at the Tallmadge Branch for her assistance in accessing the Lawrence Collection held at her facility.

A History of Tallmadge Coal

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Woodchucks and Others...

Shortly after the first settlers arrived in Town 2, Range 10 - that portion of the Connecticut Western Reserve destined to become Tallmadge, Ohio - coal was found in two areas of the township. First, Jotham Blakeslee reported finding coal around 1808 or 1809 near the surface on the farm of Col. Seth Meacham.¹ This farm was in the extreme southeast corner of the township in Tract 16; this discovery appears to have been the only one in that part of Tallmadge. Since Blakeslee was a blacksmith, the opportunity to have coal to fire his furnace was inviting. Reportedly, he was able to dig the coal with a mattock and carry it in a bag back to his shop. The bed was only about one foot thick, but it provided enough coal for Blakeslee to make several trips to refill his bag.

The major discovery of coal in the township, however, occurred in 1810 and is often credited to a woodchuck. Walking across the land owned by Justus Barnes, a resident was drawn to some shiny black stones laying on the surface. [Some sources identify the property owner as Elizur Wright.] Closer examination determined that these "stones" were actually shards of coal that had apparently been brought to the surface and cast aside by a burrowing woodchuck. The coal was found in a ravine north of the East-West center road in Tract 6; it lay in a rivulet without any cover, and so it, too, was easily accessible.² For the next several years, the "mining" operations in the township consisted mainly of blacksmiths and homeowners seeking out these sources and carrying off their coal for use at home or business. While this practice seemed to work fine for those gathering the coal, it appears that not all the land owners were as enthusiastic. At the semi-centennial celebration in 1857, Col. Whittlesey shared a story that suggests farmer Barnes was none too pleased about having his farm trampled by those seeking coal. According to Whittlesey's account, Jotham Blakeslee (the same fellow who had discovered coal earlier on Seth Meacham's farm) was driving a team across a field of new wheat in order to get to this coal. Mr. Barnes is said to have approached "with axe raised in a manner somewhat threatening" and made use of some expressions that could not have been considered friendly.³ Soon, this area west of the town center proved to be at the heart of a developing coal industry and the mining operations became much more sophisticated.

As simple as this discovery and the early scraping by hand of coal in the area were, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources has identified this discovery as "the first account of surface mining of coal in Ohio".⁴ For approximately the next one hundred years, the coal industry in Tallmadge contributed not only to the needs of the township and its neighbors, but notably to commerce on the Great Lakes as well. As the closest source of coal available to the ships on the Great Lakes, Tallmadge was a leader in the changeover from wood to coal as the chief fuel for shipping concerns in the area.

¹ Barnes, Sydney C. [LC: Box 4, Folder 14, Page 9].

² Whittlesey, Col. [LC: Box 3, Folder 43, Page 205].

³ Whittlesey, Col. [LC: Box 3, Folder 43, Page 205].

⁴ Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources, GeoFacts No. 14.

The Growth of the Coal Industry

From its humble beginnings providing fuel for a blacksmith, one bagful at a time, the mining of coal in Tallmadge quickly grew into a major industry that has been estimated to have produced nearly 1,000,000 tons before the supply was exhausted.⁵ The exact number and location of the mines that sprung up in Tallmadge may never be known, but the following discussion attempts to identify and locate those mentioned by local historians and residents. [Refer to Appendix A, pp. 25-27]

Following the discovery of coal in Tract 6 in 1810, the prospect of serious coal mining in the area began to grow. In 1819 or 1820, Samuel Bronson and Samuel Newton purchased the property of Justus Barnes and drove an entry into the bluff of what came to be known as the Coal Bank or Coal Hill.⁶ Within the next seven years, Henry Newberry had opened a mine at the northwest six corners (now the junction of Howe Road, Brittain Road, Northwest Avenue, Bailey Road, and Tallmadge Road). At about the same time, Francis H. Wright opened a mine in Tract 10, south of the west center road at the eastern base of Coal Hill; this mine was located about one-quarter mile south of Newberry's. These men were followed by Cyrus Mendenhall, formerly of Cleveland, who opened a coal vein at the south end of the hill; this mine was apparently abandoned when it proved to be too thin to work profitably. Still another opening was made in the south end of the hill by a Mr. Woodruff who worked it until 1838.⁷

When the Ohio canal was opened to Akron in 1827, Newberry was apparently the first to decide to try this means to transport his coal to Cleveland where he believed it could be used as a substitute for wood as fuel for the steamboats on the Great Lakes. He hauled his coal by wagonload to Lock 16 on the Ohio Canal. It appears the abundance of wood at the time made this experiment mostly unsuccessful as it is said to have taken him three years to sell 300 tons. Canal receipts, however, show a steady increase in the acceptance of coal. In 1830, 178 tons of coal were shipped via the Canal from Tallmadge to Cleveland; in 1831, this figure climbed to 294 tons; and in 1833 the total was 431 tons.⁸

A major event in the history of coal in Tallmadge occurred in 1832 when Daniel Upson arrived in town and took an immediate interest in the mining activity. Records from the Summit County Recorder's Office indicate Upson personally purchased several pieces of property in Tracts 5, 6, and 10 between 1833 and 1839. In 1838 he secured from the Ohio State Legislature a charter for the Tallmadge Coal Company. This charter consolidated all the coal rights in Coal Hill with the exception of Newberry's. The original stock in the Tallmadge Coal Company was held by Upson, Francis H. Wright, and Charles Whittlesey.⁹ Later, the Tallmadge Coal Company was succeeded by Dr. Upson & Co., that firm by Upson & Sons, and finally by Upson Bros.¹⁰ Beginning in 1840, the Tallmadge Coal Company purchased or leased the mineral rights to an additional fifteen pieces of land, mostly in Tract 9, the southern end of Coal Hill. In

⁵ Barnes, Sydney C. [LC: Box 4, Folder 14, Page 10].

⁶ Bronson, Charles C., "Bronson Diaries", p. 60.

⁷ Whittlesey, Col. [LC: Box 3, Folder 43, Page 205].

⁸ Wright, Charles Handel [LC: Box 7, Folder 43, Page 1829].

⁹ Whittlesey, Col. [LC: Box 3, Folder 43, Page 206].

¹⁰ Barnes, Sydney C. [LC: Box 4, Folder 14, Page 10].

addition, Upson personally purchased or secured the mineral rights to another 22 pieces of land; most of this property was located in Tracts 6, 9, and 10. He eventually obtained control, both by purchase and by lease, of approximately 500 acres of the coal beds contained in Coal Hill.¹¹ In 1853, the coal company erected two long tenement houses about midway between West Avenue and Northwest Avenue on the west side of Thomas Road. These dwellings were built to provide housing for the Welsh miners and their families until they could purchase their own homes. F.E. Lawrence described these buildings in his book About Old Tallmadge: "One tenement had six apartments, the other had eight. Each apartment had two rooms on the first floor and two rooms on the second. In the middle of one tenement was a store. The unoccupied tenements were struck by lightning, August 1898, and burned to the ground."¹² It may be that in his effort to provide temporary housing for his Welsh workers, Upson may have unintentionally made these tenements unattractive to those he was trying to assist. Lawrence's description is a perfect fit for the cramped, generally hated quarters inhabited by many miners back home in Wales. Indeed, the 1860 census shows that the sixteen apartments were all unoccupied just seven years after having been built. Interestingly, it has been said that Dr. Upson, anxious for his men to establish themselves, often lent them money to pay for the homes they so desired.¹³

In 1848, a new coal bank located east of the Long Swamp and northwest of Howe Road was opened by William H. Harris. He was soon employing 50 men – most of them Welshmen he had encouraged to emigrate for the work available.¹⁴ Harris, too, increased his holdings both by purchase and lease. Land transaction records show that he concentrated his efforts in Tracts 2 and 6. Harris is known to have operated three mines in the area; in addition to the two which were served by his rail road and located east of his home in Tract 2, he also had an entry in the high ground of Tract 1 between Northwest Avenue and Howe Road at the northwest six corners.

By 1852, Upson and Harris were shipping 10 to 20 tons of coal daily. Just five years later, Upson was employing 65 men and shipping 135 tons a day. The Tallmadge Coal Company mines produced 23,000 tons in 1855 alone; from 1840 to 1857, 300,000 tons of coal had been removed from just sixty acres of the original field of 500. There were still 100 acres of coal unworked by 1857.¹⁵ This same year, Charles Whittlesey reported in the Summit Beacon that there were then twelve entries to the coal fields of Coal Hill, all located on the north, east, and south sides. There were no entries on the west side.¹⁶ Perhaps in response to the activity generated by the concerns of Upson and Harris, new mines continued to be opened. Amos Wright opened his west of the town center in about 1859, and William Thomas sunk a shaft on the farm of Joseph Richardson in Tract 5 around 1895.

Philip Thomas, another Welshman, began work in the coal bank of William Harris soon after he emigrated from Wales; later he moved on to Upson's Tallmadge Coal operation where he worked until 1865. By 1868, Philip Thomas and William

¹¹ "Tallmadge Semi-Centennial Commemoration", p. 189.

¹² Lawrence, Frank E. About Old Tallmadge, p. 2.

¹³ Lawrence, Frank E. About Old Tallmadge, p. 2.

¹⁴ Barnes, Sydney C. [LC: Box 4, Folder 14, Page 10].

¹⁵ "Tallmadge Semi-Centennial Commemoration", p. 189.

¹⁶ Whittlesey, Charles, The Summit Beacon, June 24, 1857, p. 3.

Owens obtained the lease to Upson's coal banks. Four years later, Thomas bought out his partner's interest, continuing to run the enterprise successfully until the vein was exhausted – at one time employing some forty men and producing about 15,000 tons annually. When Philip Thomas died in 1900, the mines passed on to his sons, who operated the business under the name Henry Thomas & Co. When Henry Thomas died in 1916, another of Philip's sons, Morgan, sued the remaining heirs for sole rights to the family's mining operations in Tallmadge. He was successful in this suit and in 1919 was issued a Sheriff's Deed granting him the sole rights to the coal and mining operations in Tracts 5, 6, and 10 of the township.¹⁷ He continued limited operations until his death in 1932.

One of the last mining operations in Tallmadge was undertaken by Steve Holic in 1932 on two parcels of land apparently owned by Frances E. Thomas in Tract 6, Lot 5 between Brittain Road on the west and Thomas Road on the east. Despite economic uncertainty brought by the Depression, almost immediately problems arose over the possibility of damage such a mining operation might cause. An article in the Akron Beacon Journal provides these details:

The Tallmadge township coal mining industry which started in 1840 and at various times assumed proportions of a major industry may be revived this winter with depression-hit family heads becoming miners.

And again the mine shafts may remain closed. Factors involved are being threshed out before Common Pleas Judge Carl C. Hoyt. Mrs. Catherine Steiner, owner of an 11-acre farm tract, seeks to prevent the mining. Steve Hollic, 1344 7th Ave., holder of a lease to coal strata under the land, would resume operations.

Thus far, Hollic is ahead, having been granted a temporary order restraining Mrs. Steiner from interfering. But before the order is effective he must post a \$1000 bond to insure against damage to Mrs. Steiner. Hollic has not been able to raise the bond. Final hearing on the merits of the case will be held Nov. 19 before Judge Hoyt.¹⁸

Further documents found in the Lawrence Collection at the Tallmadge Branch Library suggest that mining did at some point begin, even though the acrimony between the parties did not die out. In 1938, a letter from C.F. Schnee, Attorney at Law, to Mrs. Thomas indicated that Holic had completed mining on Mrs. Steiner's land but was now transporting coal from another site across the Steiner property – which Schnee states, "Under the mining deeds, he has no right to do that unless he pays Mrs. Steiner for the privilege."¹⁹ Mr. Schnee then goes on to suggest that Mrs. Thomas consider giving Mrs. Steiner a quit claim to the property; this same request was made again in 1940 by Schnee on behalf of Mrs. Steiner. All-in-all, this seems to suggest a rather "muddied" ending to the coal industry in Tallmadge.

¹⁷ Summit County Recorder's Office, Vol. 778, p. 7.

¹⁸ "May Resume Mining in Tallmadge Field", Akron Beacon Journal, November 29, 1932.

¹⁹ Coal lease, [LC: Box 14, Folder 20, Item A-16].

The Market for Tallmadge Coal

The apparent quality of Tallmadge coal contributed to making it an important commodity. The coal beds in Coal Hill were described as being from four to five feet in thickness; the quality of the coal was considered to be superior. Some years later in 1984, James S. Jackson wrote that, "The seam ran out long before the end of the century but the coal has been identified in later years as comparable to what is now known as Sharon No. 1, a fine quality coal of low-sulfur content, which by today's standards would be highly prized."²⁰

From the first discovery of coal in 1809 until about 1820, it was exclusively used in the homes and businesses of the area. In particular, blacksmiths from Akron and other surrounding areas would make regular trips into Tallmadge to gather coal for their furnaces. Before long, however, the value of coal as a replacement for timber as fuel began to catch hold, and soon a market for the coal that seemed to be in such plentiful supply began to grow.

One very early market for Tallmadge coal developed when Asaph Whittlesey and Samuel Norton joined forces with William Laird and Aaron Norton of Middlebury to build a forge for the manufacture of bar iron in 1817. The area surrounding this business came to be known as "Old Forge". Obtaining their iron ore from the southwestern part of the township, the businessmen began their manufacture of iron using coal from the "woodchuck" mine in Tallmadge.²¹

As mentioned earlier, Henry Newberry appears to have been the first local miner to attempt to sell his coal commercially in 1828. Karl Grismer's account in his local history volume Akron and Summit County provides more detail on Newberry's experience:

In the early fall of '28 Newberry hauled wagonload after wagonload down over the hill to Old Portage, filled a canal boat, and shipped it to Cleveland, confidently believing he could sell it to the owners of the four steamships then running on Lake Erie. But the ship owners scoffed. Their ships had been built to burn wood and they had no intention of installing new engines.

Newberry had a boatload of coal on his hands. Day after day he tramped around Cleveland, trying to find a buyer, carrying with him a bucketful to demonstrate its fine quality. Finally, one cold day in late October, he told his troubles to Philo Scovill, manager of the Franklin House at 25 Superior.

Scovill was sympathetic. 'Hand me that bucket,' he said; 'I'll try some in the barroom stove.' Taking a few chunks, he tossed them on the blazing fire. They burned beautifully. Scovill was delighted and bought twenty bushels.

Other men in the barroom decided they wanted some for their homes. Word of the fuel which gave wonderful heat spread through the neighborhood and Newberry soon sold his entire boatload. But his

²⁰ Jackson, James, "Behind the Front Page: A Newsman Looks at Akron", p. 35.

²¹ King, Mrs. H.O., The Searchlight, October 10, 1927, p. 1.

*experience had been so trying that he made no attempt thereafter to sell to the Cleveland market.*²²

Despite Newberry's experience, before long Tallmadge coal became attractive to the steamship operators and was the first to be extensively purchased for use by steamers on the Great Lakes, replacing wood as the chief fuel. In 1841, the Western Transportation Co. consumed 3,000 tons of Tallmadge coal on their steamboats "Vermillion" and "Wisconsin" alone.²³

In about 1844 or 1845, a group of Welshmen arrived from Pittsburgh with the intent of starting a blast furnace to manufacture pig iron. They located their furnace at Canal Lock 16; in anticipation of providing the business with coal, Daniel Upson had a branch of his tramway built to connect with it. At the expense of several thousand dollars, the furnace was erected and named the Cambrian Furnace – Cambria being the Latin name for Wales. Unfortunately, the initial promise if this endeavor faded after several failed attempts to maintain the "charge" necessary to produce marketable pig iron caused the business to close. Upson was left with an uncollectible debt of \$3000 for coal and other supplies.²⁴

In 1851, an article reprinted in The Summit Beacon from the Cleveland Herald praised Tallmadge coal for producing a coke of excellent quality used in the manufacture of iron throughout Northern Ohio. The article went on to say, "Large quantities of this coal are also consumed in the generation of steam, for which it seems well adapted, and it has proved one of the most valuable varieties, used by our Gas Company for the production of gas."²⁵

Prior to the Civil War, the presence of large coal deposits in the area meant very little to local manufacturers as most operations were powered by water, especially those close to the Cascade Mill Race. However, the end of the war saw the potential of steam power become more and more attractive. Karl Grismer wrote of this age: "Akron was fortunate indeed in having abundant coal nearby. From mines within miles of town the steam age manufacturers were able to buy the coal they needed as cheaply as they could anywhere in the country, usually at tippie prices with no transportation charges. That was one of the reasons they located here. Had they been forced to pay a stiff price for coal, they quite probably would have established their plants elsewhere."²⁶ What he seems to be suggesting is that much of the growth of Akron as an industrial manufacturing town can be attributed to the local coal operations in Tallmadge and other nearby areas.

Two additional factors played important roles in the growth of the coal industry in Tallmadge: the completion of both the Ohio Canal through Akron in 1827 and the Pennsylvania & Ohio Canal in 1841 and the construction of Atlantic and Great Western Railroad lines through Tallmadge in 1864-1865. The connection by canal from Akron to Cleveland enhanced the ability of Tallmadge coal operators to efficiently supply fuel to steamers on the Great Lakes as well as Canadian gasworks in Toronto and Kingston. The Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal enabled Tallmadge coal operators to ship their coal from Akron to Beaver, Pennsylvania, on the Ohio River, thus opening up a still larger

²² Grismer, Karl, Akron and Summit County, p. 181.

²³ "Tallmadge Coal", The Summit Beacon, June 10, 1857 [LC: Box 12, Folder 36, Page 51-1]

²⁴ Lane, Samuel, Fifty Years & Over of Akron and Summit County, p. 1050-1051.

²⁵ "Tallmadge Coal", The Summit Beacon, June 11, 1851, p.1.

²⁶ Grismer, Karl, Akron and Summit County, p. 182-183.

market.²⁷ The coming of the railroad to Tallmadge permitted operators to ship their coal via rail to Akron as well as to Kent, Ravenna, and other points east.²⁸ Within about twenty years, however, such shipments were abandoned due to the exhaustion of many of the larger veins of mineral in the Tallmadge mine fields.

Locally, the business of coal remained brisk. In 1894, William Davis successfully bid to furnish coal for the Tallmadge Township Hall at \$2.50 per ton, delivered. Some 30 years later in 1923, Morgan Thomas entered into an agreement with the Summit County Commissioners to supply "1000 tons run of mine coal delivered to the County Home" for \$5.75 per ton.²⁹

The Welsh Workforce

Had it not been for the discovery of coal in Tallmadge and the resultant need for men to work those mines, it is unlikely that the Welsh community that became a viable part of the township would have grown to the size that it did. Even though many of the Welshmen who came to Tallmadge were, by most accounts, actually shoemakers, butchers, tailors, farmers, and blacksmiths, they were drawn to mine work because it was the only thing available at the time that would pay them in cash money. Many families came into the area, worked the mines in order to save a nest egg, and then moved on only to be replaced by others seeking to do the same. A brief anecdote from Frank Lawrence's collection of Tallmadge memorabilia goes a long way to demonstrate the lot of the local coal digger: "Thomas Rhymes and Tom's father Henry worked in the coal mines on Thomas Road. They would go into the mine before daylight and it would be dark when they came out – so they would not see daylight."³⁰ It's little wonder that so many of the local mine workers stayed in the mines only until they had amassed a small "nest egg" and then moved on.

A review of the United States census records for Tallmadge for the years 1850, 1860, and 1870 indicates that the vast majority of those who gave "miner" or "coal digger" as their occupation had been born in the United Kingdom. In 1850, there were 39 individuals claiming this occupation: 33 were said to have been born in England, 5 in Ireland, and 1 in Scotland. In 1860, only 16 individuals gave this occupation: 12 were born in Wales, 1 in Ireland, and 3 in Ohio. By 1870, there were 39 individuals claiming this occupation: 26 from Wales, 2 from England, one each from Ireland and Scotland, and 5 from Ohio.

Two things should be noted about the census records just described. First, in 1850, it would seem that no one in the township had been born in Wales; the truth appears to be, however, that the census takers simply gave England as the birthplace for everyone from that part of the world. Secondly, many of those who worked in the mines were also farmers, blacksmiths, etc. and gave those occupations to the census taker. One should not assume that in 1860, for example, there were really only 16 men working the highly productive mines of Tallmadge. The purpose of including the census information

²⁷ Wright, Charles Handel [LC: Box 7, Folder 43, Page 1829, 1829-1].

²⁸ King, Mrs. H.O., *The Searchlight*, October 10, 1927, p. 1.

²⁹ Coal lease, [LC: Box 14, Folder 18, Item A-9A]

³⁰ Collection of Frank E. Lawrence, [LC: Box 5, Folder 28, p. 950]

is to show that all the mine owners depended heavily on the immigrant work force to operate their mines. The magnitude of the Welsh presence in Tallmadge is seen in this comment by Frank E. Lawrence in About Old Tallmadge: "Coal mining in Tallmadge was at its peak from 1860 to 1870. That was the period when the Welsh settlement was at its height, with about 15% of the population of Tallmadge of Welsh descent and totaling about 20% of Tallmadge families."³¹

The notes of Frank E. Lawrence indicate that the first Welshman to come to Tallmadge may have been Thomas Williams who purchased seventy acres of land in Tract 6 on the south side of Howe Road from Newberry in 1810. This property was later purchased by Anson Upson. When Newberry erected a saw mill in 1823, Williams worked for him. In 1825 a good vein of coal was discovered on Newberry's land north of Howe Road in what is now Cuyahoga Falls. Williams took over the operation of this mine for Newberry.³²

Some ten years later, when Daniel Upson gained control of much of the area west of the town center that came to be known as the Coal Banks, one of his first concerns was to hire a competent, experienced man to operate his mines. The story is that he sought the advice of a Welshman, Richard Hughes, who worked for him on his farm. Hughes recommended his brother-in-law, Thomas Ellis, who was then engaged in operating a mine in Pennsylvania. Dr. Upson made an attractive offer to Ellis to come to Tallmadge and oversee the operations of the newly formed Tallmadge Coal Company. Ellis accepted and soon brought his family to the township and settled them into a large log house Upson had built for him.

By the early 1840's another Welshman, William Harris, had arrived in Tallmadge and quickly started operations of his own in a coal bank in Tract 2, east of Long Swamp and northeast of Howe Road. He soon had three mines in operation and employed 50 men. Harris is noted especially for his efforts to not only recruit Welshmen to the community but also to assist them in establishing themselves once they arrived. Many of the men he recruited came directly from Wales; when they arrived, he frequently supplied furnished living quarters for them until they had earned enough to go out on their own. The efforts of Harris undoubtedly drew many additional families from Wales into this area.

By 1845, the Welsh community was large enough that they had established their own settlement about one and one-fourth miles west of the town center and near to the Coal Banks. While many of the Welsh did speak English, there were those who conversed only in Welsh and so naturally felt comfortable having those who could understand them as their neighbors. Because their religious life was so precious to these settlers, they immediately sought a church home upon arrival. Many of the earliest Welshmen united with the Congregational Church at the town center, where the Rev. Carlos Smith welcomed them in a manner that quickly earned their regard and esteem. Weekly cottage prayer meetings held in the Welsh homes were often attended by other members of the congregation.

Despite this acceptance on the part of the Congregational Church, many of the Welsh longed for a church of their own where services could be conducted in their native language. This was particularly true of those for whom English was an insurmountable

³¹ Lawrence, Frank E., About Old Tallmadge, p. 4.

³² Lawrence, Frank E., "Our Goodly Heritage", January 15, 1975.

challenge. The first effort in this direction was accomplished by holding Sunday School in the little shoe shop of William Thomas. Mrs. Thomas would sweep and dust the shop on Saturday night, and on Sunday, the youth of the neighborhood gathered there. Finally, in about 1860, they erected a church building located on the little hill above the northwest six corners where the Chapel Hill Church and Christian School are now located. The land for this structure had been donated by Henry Newberry as long as it was used for church purposes. When he died, those who inherited the property continued to honor this agreement.

Mrs. Martha P. Bierce provides a personal sketch of the church in an article she wrote for the Tallmadge Sesqui-Centennial which was then published in the book, A History of Tallmadge, Ohio. According to her description, the church *"was a small frame building with a seating capacity of 75 to 100. Perhaps its only claim to beauty was the unusual fan light [window] centered over the double front door. There were nice pews with green cushions, a chandelier for coal-oil lamps, and a coal burning stove. Upon the wall hung an antique clock which seemed to move its hands slowly for the tots who early were taught respect for the House of God and who must sit straight and still during the hour of worship."*



This photo shows the Welsh church after it had been abandoned. It sat facing East on Brittain Rd.; Howe Rd. run along the right hand side of the photo. Photo courtesy of Special Collections, Akron-Summit County Public Library.

Eventually, according to Mrs. Bierce, the family of Philip Thomas presented the congregation with a small organ *"to accompany those fine Welsh voices as they sang their songs of praise."*³³

On at least one occasion, this small congregation hosted the yearly association meeting, which brought Welsh ministers from all parts of the state. Three meetings a day

³³ Bierce, Mrs. Martha P., A History of Tallmadge, Ohio, p. 28.

were held with two sermons at each. It was reported that the visiting ministers presented fiery and powerful messages that left those in attendance weak with guilt as well as soothing, uplifting messages that reminded those in attendance that all was not lost. Mrs. Bierce tells of the final chapter in the church's story with these words:

Finally, there came a day when all of the church founders were gone. Their descendants having become thoroughly Americanized, gradually drifted away from the old church and from the mother tongue.

For many years the old landmark stood abandoned, clinging helplessly to its foothold on the hill.

The land reverted to the farm of which it was originally a part. Grading for a paved road made the position of the building precarious and it was thought best to tear it down.³⁴

Just as it is today, music was an important part of Welsh life. In addition to the sweet songs of Welsh hymns on Sundays, the Welsh community in Tallmadge also contributed when the first Eisteddfod, or singing competition, was held in Youngstown. One story, as recounted in the Cuyahoga Falls Reporter on July 7, 1905, goes like this:

Thomas Thomas the tailor (so called because there was another Thomas Thomas in town who was not a tailor) had moved to Youngstown and opened a small clothing store after earning the capital to do so by working in the mines at Tallmadge. Although he was a fine singer, he was also a very old man at the time of this event. A prize had been offered for the best bass solo sung at sight. Of course the music was low, but the last note was D below. There were a number of competitors: self-confident young men, fine looking, well dressed, and didn't they sing well? But that last low note beat them; not one of them could reach it, but sang it an octave higher and left the stage chagrined at their failure, while the audience laughed and cheered. Finally, an old gentleman advanced to the stage, very plainly dressed but dignified and easy [of] manner. He began to sing, and the great hall was so still you could have heard a pin drop. His rich, deep, languid tone charmed the whole house. When he came to that last low note, the people were almost breathless with suspense. Would he reach the low note and win the prize, or would he fail as the others had? But apparently without effort he struck the note and held it, sustained and clear, while a great burst of applause greeted him from the delighted audience. The old man was Thomas Thomas the tailor, who earned his first dollar in America working in the Tallmadge coal mine.

Along with practice of their faith, patriotism and a willingness to serve and defend their newly adopted country were not lost on these Welshmen. However, as is true with most stories involving the Welsh, there is a tale even here with an element of humor to it. As the War of the Rebellion became more and more imminent, an artillery company under the command of Captain Sidney Barnes was formed at the northwest six corners. This company was comprised mainly of Welshmen who lived near the coal mines there. The company had secured an old cannon and faithfully drilled with it in Barnes' pasture field. Eventually, powder was secured, and the men prepared to learn how to fire the

³⁴ Bierce, Mrs. Martha P., in A History of Tallmadge, Ohio, p. 28.

cannon. Details are sketchy, but it seems the cannon exploded the first time it was fired, and the whole company narrowly escaped death. As it was, a number of the men were wounded by flying pieces of metal.³⁵

Despite this less than stellar start to their military training, when war was declared, the young Welshmen of Tallmadge volunteered and served. Several of them were part of Company C, 115th Ohio Volunteer Infantry and were captured and marched to Andersonville Prison in Georgia. Upon release, some of their numbers were tragically killed in the explosion of the Sultana, one of these being Edward Ellis, son of Thomas Ellis, the first foreman hired by Daniel Upson.

One Welsh family in particular established deep roots in the Tallmadge area after being drawn to the region by coal. John Thomas arrived from Monmouthshire, Wales about 1849. He was accompanied by his wife, Rachel; daughter, Elizabeth; sons Llewellyn and William; and grandchildren John J., William, and Mary Ann Davis. The 1850 census shows him at age 55 working as a "coal digger" along with sons Llewellyn and William, probably at the coal bank of William Harris. Shortly afterward, son Philip and his family arrived from Wales. This family became the backbone of coal mining operations in Tallmadge for the next 75 years. While John Thomas' son, Philip, was carving out his place in the history of coal in Tallmadge as was described earlier, Thomas' grandson, William Davis, was working to make a name for himself as well. He also began as a coal digger and over the years was able to purchase land and mining rights which he successfully operated. Frank E. Lawrence in his About Old Tallmadge suggests that Davis may have been the first coal dealer in Tallmadge. Davis also went on to be elected to several terms as Tallmadge Township Trustee. His sister, Mary Ann Davis, married Thomas Roberts, a Welshman who had immigrated from Carmarthenshire, Wales, with at least two of his brothers. Thomas Roberts worked as a coal digger and farmer while he and Mary Ann raised a family of six children. According to Samuel Lane, he eventually went into the business of coal dealer with one of his sons.³⁶

It becomes abundantly clear that much of the success of the Tallmadge coal industry can be credited to the contributions of the Welsh immigrants who came to work its mines; however, their most lasting impact may stem from the cultural heritage they brought to their new home. Perhaps the contributions of the Welsh immigrants were best summed up by Charles Handel Wright, former editor of the Akron [Beacon] Journal and Tallmadge son. In a piece entitled "History of the Coal Industry in Tallmadge, Ohio", apparently written about 1922 and just two years before his death, Wright said:

Perhaps the biggest and best thing which resulted from the original mining on Coal Hill by the woodchuck was the bringing to Tallmadge a number of hardy experienced Welshmen directly from the mines of the Old Country. A writer of one of the papers of the Archeological and Historical Society of Ohio, in describing the establishing of a Congregational Church in 1803 in the first Welsh settlement in Ohio at Paddy's Run, twenty-two miles northeast of Cincinnati says: 'The first thing a Frenchman does in a new country is to

³⁵ Jones, Anna C. Evans, [LC: Box 14, Folder 16, Pages 139-141]

³⁶ Lane, Samuel, Fifty Years & Over of Akron and Summit County, p. 1059.

build a trading post; an Englishman builds a block house, but a Welshman builds a church.'

True to their National characteristics, the Welsh miners, soon after their settlement in Tallmadge established their church at the Northwest Six Corners, and for many years services were held regularly in it, the Welsh language being used. As the older generation passed on and as coal deposits became exhausted, there ceased to exist a strictly Welsh settlement in Tallmadge. But the little church, deserted, vacant, alone, still stands as a document to the sterling worth and integrity of the founders.

Some of our best citizenry, not alone in Tallmadge, but throughout a wide circle in Northern Ohio, has come from the Welsh miners who brought forth for human use the stored up wealth of Coal Hill. The names of Thomas, Phillips, Evans, Morgan, Williams, Davis, Lewis, Jones, James, Guffites [sic], and Jenkins typify true Americans.³⁷

As Wright suggested, most of these men moved on to become farmers and businessmen once they had earned sufficient money to leave the mines. Still, their imprint was left on the community that had offered them an opportunity to earn the means to establish their families with dignity in a new land.

A Trip into a Tallmadge Coal Mine

In July 1849, the editor of The Summit Beacon, John Teesdale, accepted an invitation to tour a mine owned by Daniel Upson, founder of the Tallmadge Coal Company. The resulting article which appeared in the paper on July 25, 1849, provides a unique glimpse into the mines and mining process in Tallmadge. What follows is a complete transcript of this article.

D. Upson & Co.'s Coal Mines

Accepting a polite invitation from our highly esteemed friend, Dr. D. Upson, we paid a visit to his Coal Mines, in Tallmadge, one day last week. A ride of 4 miles, in company with two pleasant companions, was disposed of in a very short time, and we were gratified at finding the enterprising proprietor and his gentlemanly sons, who are associated with him, on hand.

We may here premise that the Tallmadge Mines are nearer Cleveland than any other that have yet been opened or discovered. They are 4 miles from this place by canal, and 41 from Cleveland. The point at which they have been opened faces a valley or basin of considerable width and length. This basin is now mostly under cultivation, but was once partly covered with water dammed in by the Beavers, the remains of whose works may yet be seen. The entrance to the mines is at the base of a range of hills or undulating ground, whose elevation at the point of

³⁷ Wright, Charles Handel [LC: Box 7, Folder 43, Page 1829, 1829-2].

operations, is a little rising 600 feet. The bed of coal covers an area of 450 acres, and its average thickness is about 5 feet. The vein is rich and uniform in its yield. It is easily mined on account of its purity and depth. The yield is many thousands of tons to the acre, and as few acres have been worked, it may be imagined that the period when the mines will be exhausted, at the present rate of working, will be very remote. Several entries have been made into the hill, at different points, without perceptible difference in the quality or quantity of coal. Operations are still confined to the old and main entry, as it yields all that the demand has required, and saves the expense of new entries. Some 25 years since, the inhabitants of Tallmadge, in that vicinity, discovered and commenced using this coal. About 15 years since Dr. Upson and his associates commenced operations by opening the main entry.

Having provided ourselves with candles, enveloped our heads with handkerchiefs and placed us under the lead of Dr. F. W. Upson, we took seats in one of the coal cars, and the carman started the stout little horse who draws after him, usually, on his outward trip, four or five of these cars, containing about a ton and a half of coal each. We had gone but a few yards before we found the need of our lights, and found ourselves breathing an atmosphere, that prompted us to button tighter around us our coats. The several lights of the company scarcely penetrated the darkness sufficiently to render the horse's head visible. But on pressed our pony, the active and vigilant carman, with a lamp flaming in the front of his cap, stirring him up to additional speed. We soon reached and deposited at the chambers or entries diverging on the right and left, our little train of cars. The begrimed and blackened miners opened their eyes in amazement as we came suddenly upon them, a dozen lights streaming from as many hands. In our company, was a lady and gentleman from Buffalo, and a couple from Cleveland. Disengaged from the surplus cars we pressed forward through the main entry. This entry extends nearly half a mile into the hill, the dip being but very slight to the mouth of the entry. We penetrated to the end, and then alighted and entered one of the chambers. On either hand were solid walls of coal. Above was a comparatively smooth surface sometimes of sandstone, at others of shale. Beneath was a varying surface of stone, slate and fire clay. A rich bed of the material called metallic, or Fire Proof Paint, is now being worked by Dr. Upson. It was discovered in the interior of the mine and has been pronounced a superior article. We were most interested in the vegetable fossils and impressions which abounded in the roof above us. Some of these were exceedingly beautiful. There is a great variety of plants, shrubs, and even trunks of massive trees, thus portrayed. The finest fibres of the bark, the most minute variations in the character of the plant, were detected at a glance. Several almonds have been observed and taken out among other vegetable fossils. These mementoes of the vegetation of the dim past, like all discovered in the same position in various portions of the country, tell one language. This was once a tropical climate and the vegetation is

purely tropical. After spending some time in the contemplation of these interesting objects, which carried us back to a period long antecedent to the creation of man, we prepared to return; having witnessed also, during our stay, the operation of mining. This is a simple, though very laborious operation. The miner lies down on his side and with a pick and other instruments undermines the coal. A blast is then placed above, a slow match applied, allowing the miners time to scatter before the mass of coal, unsupported below, is brought down.

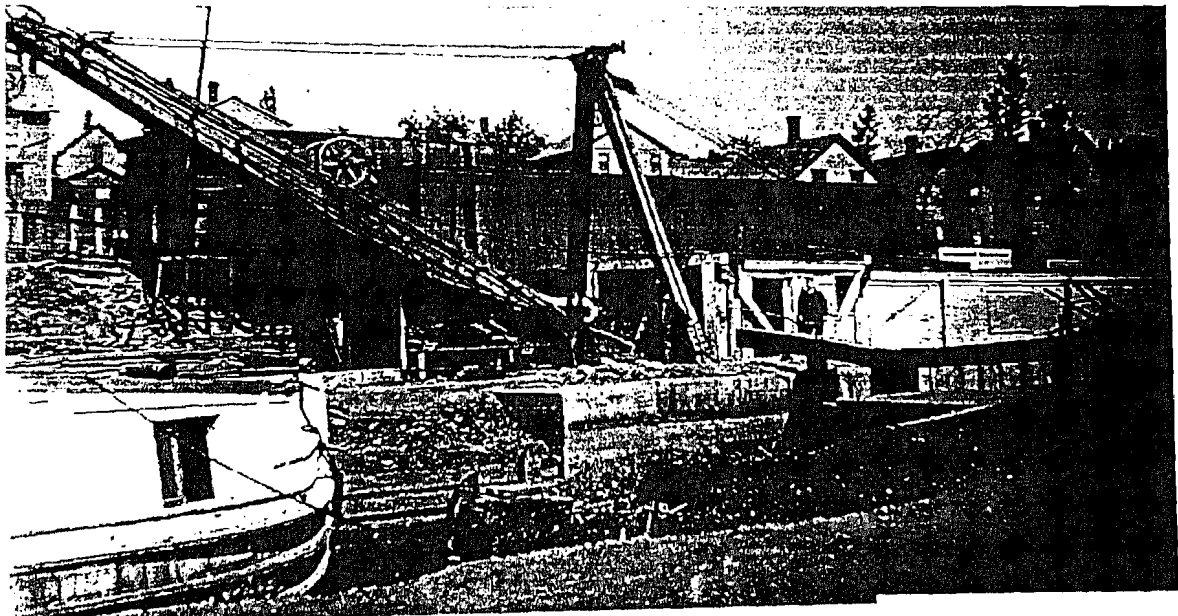
D. Upson and Co. mine about 10,000 tons of coal per year, the largest portion of which is shipped to Cleveland, via a rail-road two miles in length, erected by the Company, and the Ohio Canal. Of this a considerable quantity goes to various ports on the Upper and Lower Lakes. The Toronto gas works consume annually 1000 tons, and the Kingston gasworks, now ready for operation, expect to use the same amount, in the manufacture of gas. A number of the Lakes steamers, and the largest share of the steam works at Cleveland, are supplied by the Tallmadge mines. It is but a few years since the steamers commenced the use of coal. Now, all of them depend much upon it.

This coal burns freely, having enough bitumen in its composition to render it durable on the fire, while it does not bind. It leaves but a small quantity of ashes, and these are heavy and a little liable to fly about, but rendering it a favorite article for family use.

From 15,000 to 20,000 bushels of Coke, a portion of which is used by cupola furnaces in the vicinity for melting iron for castings, is manufactured by the proprietors of the mines. The balance is shipped to Cleveland.

Dr. Upson resides about a mile and a half from the mines, on one of the finest farms in one of the richest townships of land, and among as happy, intelligent, wealthy and prosperous a body of farmers as can be found in the whole west.

The reader needs to pick through the talk of fossils, but here is a very clear, if simple, picture of the life of the miners. They worked in extreme darkness at chilling temperatures. Much of their time was spent lying on their sides, chipping away at a section of coal with hand tools. Then, although surely stiff from cold and supine position, they had to be agile enough to escape a safe distance away from an already lit fuse to avoid being buried under falling rock when the coal was blasted loose. That would have been followed by the back-breaking work of shoveling tons of coal from the floor of the mine into mine cars to be transported by the mine pony to the outside world. It was dirty, strenuous, and dangerous work for which the men were being paid approximately \$0.80 a ton. The beauty of the fossils overhead was probably lost on the miners who passed wearily beneath them everyday.



This photo, taken about 1890, shows a coal loading machine used to transfer coal from rail cars to canal barges. Photo courtesy of Special Collections, Akron-Summit County Public Library.

The Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal

Even though the abundance of coal in Tallmadge appeared to be inexhaustible in the early days, there is some question whether the mining industry in the township would have blossomed as it did without the construction of the Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal – also known as the “Cross-Cut Canal”, completed in 1840. Access to the Ohio Canal which had been completed to Cleveland in 1827 and extended to the Ohio River in 1830 was not easy for the Tallmadge operators, as witnessed by Newberry’s experiment in 1827. However, the “Cross-Cut Canal”, which would run along the western and northern borders of the township, would provide a means to reach both the Ohio Canal in Akron and the Ohio River near Pittsburgh, thus opening up the possibilities for distribution to a great extent. Samuel Lane quotes a bill that was introduced in the Ohio Legislature in about 1826 to incorporate the Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal Company “for the sole purpose of making a navigable canal between some suitable point on the Ohio River, through the valley of the Mahoning River, to some suitable point on Lake Erie, or to some point on the Ohio Canal”.³⁸

By 1828, an initial survey had been completed and the proposed route of the canal was detailed in a report found in John Kilborn’s “Complete Official History” of Ohio’s canals. In part, this report outlines the path of the canal through what was to become Summit County:

Commencing at the village of Akron, where the proposed Canal will unite with the Ohio Canal in a large and commodious basin, the line pursues an easterly direction, crossing the little Cuyuhoga in the village of

³⁸ Lane, Samuel, Fifty Years & Over of Akron and Summit County, p. 71.

*Middlebury, thence in a northeastwardly direction through the township of Tallmadge until it approaches near the main Cuyahoga at the centre north and south road in the township of Stow, thence continuing nearly the same general course along the south and southeast bank of that river until it passes the village of Franklin.*³⁹

Despite the early enthusiasm for this project, a number of factors contributed to sluggish progress. It was some eight years after the initial surveys were completed before work began in earnest in 1835; funding, economic factors, and disputes over changes in the path of the canal continued to slow the project before it was finally completed in the spring of 1840.

Daniel Upson appears to have kept a close eye on this project and made plans to take advantage of the new canal soon after it was completed. In 1841, the Tallmadge Coal Company constructed a tramway from its mines in Coal Hill to the Pennsylvania & Ohio Canal at what was called "Nine Locks" where today Evans Avenue crosses the CSX railroad tracks. The Tramway was two miles in length and followed the path of the current Thomas Road. Hewed timbers were used for ties and 4 inch scantling for rails. The cars which carried the coal each had a three ton capacity.⁴⁰ As humble as it may seem today, this rail road running on wooden rails was reportedly the first railroad of any kind in Summit Co.⁴¹ This innovation made the transport of coal from mine to canal much more efficient than the previous use of wagons pulled by teams of horses or oxen.

Soon after, William Harris realized his own canal access. As early as 1849, it appears Harris was making plans to construct a railroad to carry his coal to the canal. In a letter dated September 27, 1849 written to the chief engineer of the Central Rail Road in Michigan, Harris inquired about purchasing a "quantity of rail road iron" that he hoped to use in "making a railroad for the purpose of transporting coal from my coal mine to the canal which is about one and a half miles [away]".⁴² While it's not known if this purchase was made, records in Summit County indicate that in 1851 Harris leased land from William Gilling "...sufficient in width on which to lay a rail road commencing at the south line of said Gillings land when said rail road passes through the tunnel under the highway and terminating at the canal." Also included was additional land "about the coal shute to make it convenient to pass about said shute say about two rods square if necessary". The terms of this lease called for a \$12.00 annual payment to Gilling.⁴³ While his rail road had metal rails -- as opposed to the wooden timbers used for the Tallmadge Coal Co.'s tramway -- the power to move the coal cars was still furnished by mules and horses. Frank E. Lawrence states that such a coal rail road existed from the mine operated by Charles Whittlesey and Myron Tompkins at what is locally remembered as Baker's Acres, went north to the Harris farm where it hooked into Harris' rail road, and then proceeded northward to Canal Lock 19 at Munroe Falls. Lawrence places this Munroe Falls lock at the location of today's Waterworks Park in Cuyahoga

³⁹ Kilbourn, John, compiler, *The Ohio Canals... A Complete Official History...*, pp. 299-300.

⁴⁰ Wright, Charles Handel [LC: Box 7, Folder 43, Page 1829, 1829-1].

⁴¹ Lawrence, Frank E., *Miscellaneous Notes* [LC: Box 4, Folder 23, Page 59G].

⁴² Archer, H.E., [LC: Box 7, Folder 27, Page 1709].

⁴³ Summit County Recorder's Office, Vol. 19, Page 17.

Falls.⁴⁴ There, coal chutes would transfer the mineral from the cars to canal barges for the journey north to Lake Erie or east to Pittsburgh and beyond.

After some twelve to fifteen years of successful operation, by 1852 this canal began to suffer from stiff competition with the railroads. The first train passed through Tallmadge Center in 1863; soon after, a switch was built from that railroad to the coal mines.⁴⁵ This spelled the beginning of the end for coal shipments via canal. By 1874, local feelings about the all but stagnant canal were decisively demonstrated when "an emphatic demurrer one night, in the Spring of 1874, [began] filling the canal with earth at the Exchange Street bridge, and tapping the towing path at one or two points further North, and discharging the waters of the level upon the bottom lands, and into the Ohio Canal on the west."⁴⁶ Although legal proceedings were initiated against the violators, these were soon dropped and that portion of the canal reverted to the adjacent landowners. Early in the 1880's, plans were put forth for the Pittsburgh & Western Rail Road, the eventual path of which followed the bed and banks of the now defunct Pennsylvania & Ohio Canal. This took the railway along the path it still follows today – "from New Castle, Pennsylvania passing through Ravenna, Kent and Cuyahoga Falls, [entering] Akron at the Old Forge, its present western terminus".⁴⁷

The End of the Coal Industry

Just as an extensive canal and railway system developed in the area, along with the promise of widespread and economical shipments of coal to distant consumers, the Tallmadge coal operations were facing an unexpected decline in production. Two factors appear to have played major roles in the demise of Tallmadge's coal industry: first, the demands for better pay and safer working conditions for miners and canal men alike disrupted production; second, and certainly of greater importance, the veins of coal previously thought of as being "inexhaustible" simply became depleted.

In the 1870's there were infrequent reports in the local papers about work stoppages and strikes in the local mines due to disputes between the miners and owners over wages, safety equipment, and the way weights were computed and recorded. In July 1870, it was reported that a strike of local coal miners had been ongoing for months and that mine owners, including those in Tallmadge, were starting to evict families from company-owned houses. The vague report indicated that wages were the chief point of dispute but provided no details of what the miners were then receiving and what they were demanding. The situation had mushroomed to such an extent by August of 1870, that two mine owners in the southern part of the county, George Steese and Alexander Brewster, had brought in large numbers of miners from New York to replace those who were on strike. In response, the striking miners congregated in Akron and attempted to prevent mined coal from being loaded onto canal boats for transport north to Cleveland and south to Ohio River ports. The Sheriff at the time had to swear in a number of special deputies and post them at the struck mines to maintain order.

⁴⁴ Lawrence, Frank E., About Old Tallmadge, p. 2.

⁴⁵ Collection of Frank E. Lawrence, [LC: Box 19, Folder 29, p. 7.

⁴⁶ Lane, Samuel, Fifty Years & Over of Akron and Summit County, p. 79.

⁴⁷ Lane, Samuel, Fifty Years & Over of Akron and Summit County, p. 636.

By April 1872, the same demands over wages and safety conditions were again on the minds of local miners, but they had begun to organize themselves and to bargain with the owners in a more formal manner. A news report indicated that the chief demand of the miners was a raise in pay from \$.80 a ton mined to \$1.00 a ton. After much negotiation, frequent walkouts and some lockouts, most mines in the region began paying the miners \$.90 a ton.⁴⁸

At about the same time that the miners were making some headway with owners over their wages, the boatmen on the Canal went on strike against the coal operators demanding an increase in the rates for transporting coal on the canal. An article appearing in The Daily Beacon on July 12, 1872 explained that the dry conditions that year prevented the boatmen from carrying the previous capacity on each trip – the canal was simply too shallow to accommodate the full load without the risk of boats running aground. This would result in additional trips to carry the coal, and the boatmen wanted an increase in rate to compensate them for the change. The paper reported that local coal miners appeared to be in agreement with the boatmen, but the coal operators refused the demands causing many boats to lie idle at various points on the Ohio Canal and leading the paper to suggest, “it is thought probable that it will lead to the closing of other mines besides those which ship altogether by canal”.⁴⁹ By July 16, the paper reported an agreement had been reached between mine operators and the Boatmen and Laborers’ Union of Ohio which allowed the idle boats to immediately depart to pick up and transport cargo.

Such disruptions in mining and transport of coal were especially difficult for the relatively small mining operations in Tallmadge. Unlike the “golden days” of the 1840-1860’s, the mines in Tallmadge now had competition from newly developed facilities in other parts of Ohio as well as nearby states. They no longer held the exclusive arrangement of supplying all the coal needed for the Great Lakes’ steamers and power plants. Every time their operations were interrupted, their competition had the opportunity to step in and take their places.

Regardless of the potential for loss of business that might have resulted from the working man’s efforts to be treated and paid fairly, an even greater concern developed that would bring to an end the highly successful coal industry in Tallmadge: their coal mines were becoming depleted. In 1866, Charles Whittlesey had cautioned in the Summit County Beacon that continued successful and extensive mining in Tallmadge was unlikely due to the fact that the coal bed “is very irregular in thickness, stratification, and quality”. He further compared it to the English coal plane which was typically “so regular that its depths below the surface can be determined long distances from the outcrop”.⁵⁰ Undoubtedly, the Welshmen who had worked the coal mines in Wales were expecting the Tallmadge coal beds to be similar. Whittlesey’s predictions were soon proven to be true.

By 1887, the Tallmadge Coal Co. went out of business and leased its remaining holdings to Philip Thomas due to the exhaustion of the larger veins that had provided so many tons of coal for fifty years. What was left was mined only for local consumption. While they were no longer mining for distribution elsewhere, the local operators

⁴⁸ Collection of Frank E. Lawrence, [LC: Box 12, Folder 36, Page 104-1]

⁴⁹ “Canal Boatmen Striking”, The Daily Beacon, July 12, 1872, p. 4.

⁵⁰ Whittlesey, Charles, The Summit County Beacon, March 1, 1866, p.1.

continued to provide their neighbors with adequate coal to fuel their homes and businesses.

Briefly, in 1922, the Tallmadge mines once again became important to the region. A widespread coal miners' strike had shut down most operations in the area, so Morgan Thomas opened three of the mines in Coal Hill and was able to produce about 30 tons a day from them. This did much to relieve the coal shortage not only in Tallmadge but also in Akron and Cuyahoga Falls.

Conclusion

Tallmadge was originally organized by the Rev. David Bacon, a Congregational minister from Connecticut, who envisioned an agricultural Utopia in the wilds of the Western Reserve. His dream was to create a community largely settled by others of the Congregational faith who would work together to promote their deep-seated interests in religion and education. That this vision failed to materialize as Bacon had planned is a part of history, but the role the discovery of coal in the region played in this outcome should not be ignored.

Coal brought industry into the community of Tallmadge within twenty years of its first recorded discovery. While the mine owners and workers continued to labor on their farms, coal changed the face of the region. Owners looked for ways to market their coal outside of the immediate area and quickly saw the construction of the Ohio & Erie and Pennsylvania & Ohio Canals as a means to do just that. Soon, these humble farmers were engaging in commerce to the north on the Great Lakes as well as in Canada and to the east to Pittsburgh and beyond. When the railroad reached the area, other opportunities for marketing their coal offered themselves to these entrepreneurs. Had the coal fields proven to be as "inexhaustible" as originally boasted, it is not outrageous to consider that Tallmadge might have become the first major city in the county instead of its neighbor, Akron. Regardless of that unfulfilled potential, the coal industry appears to have quickly altered Tallmadge from the vision of a sedate, somewhat reserved haven for religious study supported by agricultural pursuits. This change in focus created an atmosphere in which adept businessmen were able to look beyond their farms to commerce on a large scale. Without debating whether Bacon's vision would have been the better path to follow, it cannot be denied that coal would have surely influenced his plans even if other factors had not already caused him to abandon his dream.

Coal had also brought to Tallmadge an entire culture in the form of a large Welsh community that settled within its boundaries to support the mining operations. Daniel Upson had realized from the start that he and his neighbors were not equipped to operate their coal mines on the scale needed to enter a developing market far outside their township borders. His decision to seek the assistance of an experienced mine operator in the person of Thomas Ellis certainly played a major role in the rapid increase of Welsh emigrants arriving in Tallmadge. Many of these men made their modest fortunes and moved on; however, equal numbers remained in the community after the collapse of the

mining industry and planted roots far deeper than the coal seams they had arrived to dig. To repeat the words of Charles Handel Wright used earlier: "Some of our best citizenry, not alone in Tallmadge, but throughout a wide circle in Northern Ohio, has come from the Welsh miners who brought forth for human use the stored up wealth of Coal Hill." Perhaps that is the greatest legacy of coal in Tallmadge, Ohio.

Appendix A: Map of Tallmadge Coal History






The actual location of the many mines which existed in Tallmadge is for the most part unknown today. Even the Ohio Department of Natural Resources has come up empty in this area. The only map of a Tallmadge mine known to have been on file with the Ohio Division of Mines was located by F.E. Lawrence in 1977; it appears to be for the shaft sunk by William Thomas on the farm of Joseph Richardson around 1895. The information Lawrence received indicates the mine owner was J. B. Richardson and the Supervisor, W.L. Thomas. The location was noted as Tract 5, Lot 3 in the northwest corner of Tallmadge Township. Lawrence's notes contain the following description: "Map was measured off in 66 yards to an inch – was 8 inches in length – so mine would have been approximately a mile long. Main shaft [was] to the north and mine air shaft to the south about 485 feet apart."⁵¹ This lack of descriptive mapping may be the case because so few vertical mines were part of the Tallmadge system, coupled with the possibility that many of the "mines" remembered may have been quite shallow. The vast majority of the mine entries appear to have been horizontal, hillside tunnels as opposed to vertical shafts. The only two confirmed vertical shafts known to have existed were located at opposite ends of Coal Hill: to the north, for the mine on the property of Joseph Richardson, and to the south, perhaps for the mine of Charles Whittlesey.

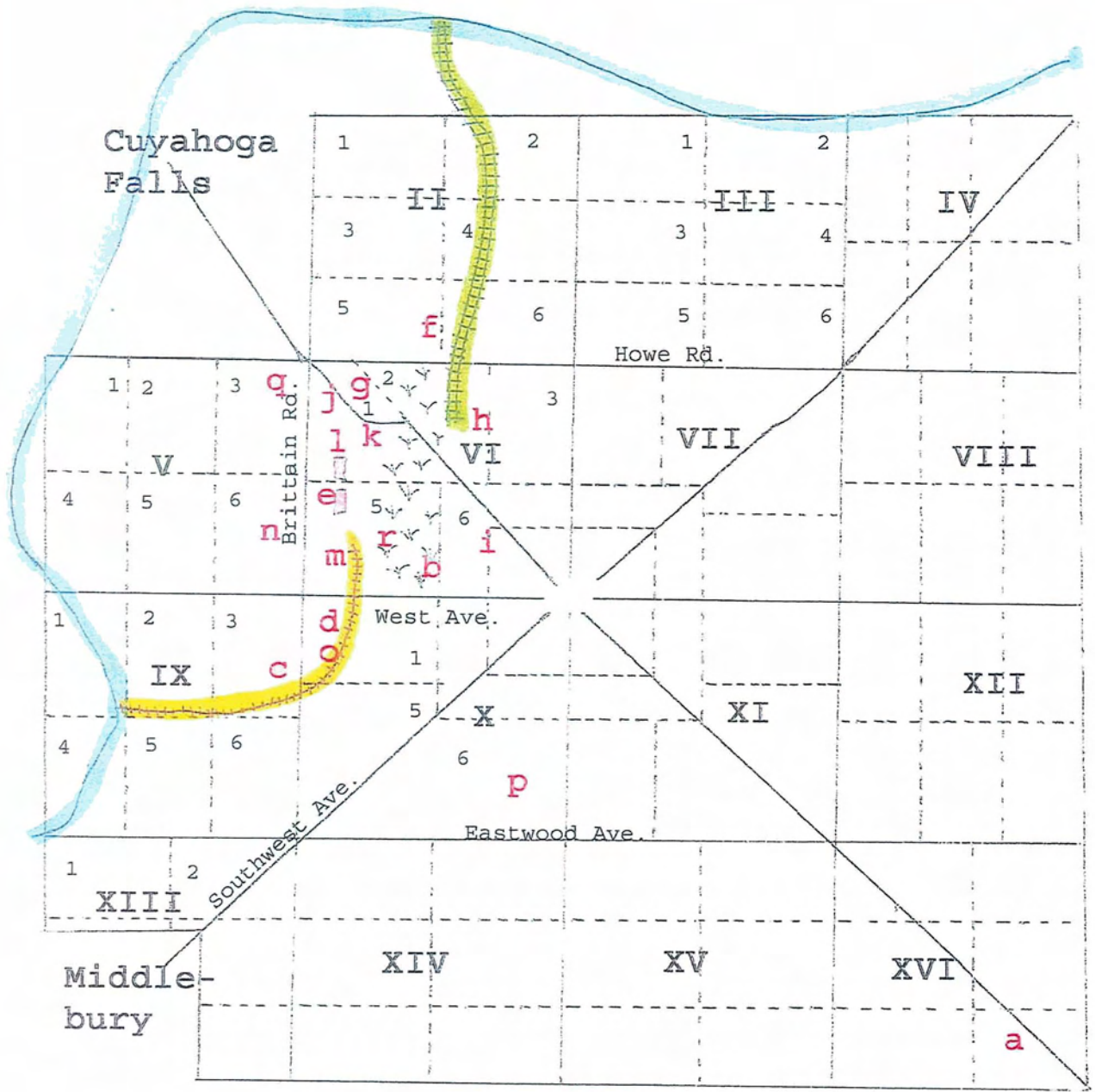
The lack of maps identifying the specific location of mine entries makes it impossible for this writer to do much more than assemble the recollections and notations found in research in an attempt to at least approximate the locations of as many mining operations as possible. It will be immediately obvious to the reader that the vast majority of the Tallmadge mining operations were located either in the vicinity of the "Coal Banks" – that sloping hillside between what is today Brittain Road and Thomas Road west of Tallmadge Circle, or to the north of Northwest Avenue on either side of Howe Road. It is important once again to note that the information used here regarding many of these operations amounts to nothing more than hearsay as it is often based on the recollections of older residents rather than legal documentation.

The format for the map which follows is based on the 1856 Summit County Map from surveys by Hosea Paul, Civil Engineer Surveyor. The Roman numerals on the map presented here represent the original Tract numbers created when the township was surveyed in 1806 by Seth Ensign. Within these Tracts, lots are plotted using broken lines and identified with Arabic numbers. General locations of several mining operations are designated using lower case letters in red.

⁵¹ Douglas, John, [LC: Box 6, Folder 13, p. 1202-1]

Map Key

	<i>Pennsylvania & Ohio Canal completed in 1840</i>
	<i>Tallmadge Coal Co. Tramway built in 1841</i>
	<i>William Harris Coal Rail Road built abt. 1851</i>
	<i>Miner Tenements built by Daniel Upson in 1853</i>
	<i>Great Swamp, aka Long Swamp, Tamarack Swamp</i>
<i>a</i>	<i>1809 Coal discovered by Jotham Blakeslee on farm of Seth Meacham, Tract 16, Lot 6</i>
<i>b</i>	<i>1810 Coal discovered by woodchuck on farm of Justus Barnes, Tract 6, Lot 5</i>
<i>c</i>	<i>Vertical shaft mine perhaps opened by Charles Whittlesey</i>
<i>d</i>	<i>1856 Upson & Sons Coal Bank [probable multiple openings]</i>
<i>e</i>	<i>1856 Richardson Coal Bank [probable multiple openings]</i>
<i>f</i>	<i>1856 William Harris Coal Bank [at least two openings]</i>
<i>g</i>	<i>1856 William Harris acquired 34.36 acres from Thomas Ellis</i>
<i>h</i>	<i>1857 Charles Whittlesey & Myron Tompkins lease coal rights to William Harris; Philip Thomas took over this operation in 1883</i>
<i>i</i>	<i>1859 Amos Wright opened mine west of town center</i>
<i>j</i>	<i>Mining operations in Tract 6, Lot 1 by Thomas Ellis per 1861 Tallmadge Tax Duplicate</i>
<i>k</i>	<i>Mining operations in Tract 6, Lot 1 by David Lewis per 1861 Tallmadge Tax Duplicate</i>
<i>l</i>	<i>Mining operations in Tract 6, Lot 1 by David Owen per 1861 Tallmadge Tax Duplicate</i>
<i>m</i>	<i>Mining operations in Tract 6, Lot 5 by E. Harris per 1861 Tallmadge Tax Duplicate</i>
<i>n</i>	<i>Mining operations in Tract 5, Lot 6 by Aaron Sackett per 1861 Tallmadge Tax Duplicate</i>
<i>o</i>	<i>Mining operations in Tract 10, Lot 1 by Francis H. Wright per 1861 Tallmadge Tax Duplicate</i>
<i>p</i>	<i>1881 David Collum opens mine on his farm</i>
<i>q</i>	<i>1895 William Thomas sinks a vertical shaft on the land of Joseph Richardson [only mine known to have been mapped]</i>
<i>r</i>	<i>1932 Steve Holic mining on property of Frances Thomas</i>



Appendix B: Possible Early Mining Locations

The following records are included to illustrate the large number of land transactions suggesting the vastness of coal mining operations in Tallmadge. It is important here to understand that each of the original sixteen tracts laid out contained approximately 960 acres; usually, each tract was then broken down into six lots of 160 acres each. It is certainly conceivable, therefore, that several mine openings could have been in operation within a single lot. This list is not meant to include all such transactions within the township; a more extensive study of land records than was feasible at this time would be needed to be comprehensive.

<i>Tract</i>	<i>Lot</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>II</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>1855</i>	<i>Coal lease from Eli Bartholomew to William Harris</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 30, Pg. 181]</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>1857</i>	<i>Francis James to William Harris</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 32, Pg. 301]</i>
	<i>6</i>	<i>1859</i>	<i>Eli Bartholomew to William Harris by Sheriff</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 37, Pg. 411]</i>
<i>V</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>1840</i>	<i>Coal lease from Fredrick Wadsworth to Tallmadge Coal Co.</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 1, Pg. 241]</i>
	<i>6</i>	<i>1855</i>	<i>Coal lease from Aaron Sackett to Tallmadge Coal Co.</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 30, Pg. 143]</i>
	<i>6</i>	<i>1881</i>	<i>William Upton to Philip Thomas</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 127, Pg. 154]</i>
		<i>1890</i>	<i>Coal lease from James Upson to Philip Thomas for all</i> <i>Tallmadge Coal Co. holdings in Tract V</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 164, Pg. 296]</i>
	<i>6</i>	<i>1894</i>	<i>Andrew Means to Philip Thomas</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 230, Pg. 590]</i>
	<i>3</i>	<i>1895</i>	<i>William Thomas mining on land of Joseph Richardson</i> <i>[Lawrence Collection, Box 6, Folder 13, Page 1202-1]</i>
	<i>6</i>	<i>1913</i>	<i>Frank & Ada C. Thomas to Philip Thomas</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 434, Pg. 593]</i>
<i>VI</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>1810</i>	<i>Woodchuck "discovers" coal on land of Justus Barnes</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>1840</i>	<i>Coal lease from Charles Whittlesey to Tallmadge Coal Co.</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 1, Pg. 240]</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>1841</i>	<i>Frederick Wadsworth to Tallmadge Coal Co.</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 1 Pg. 622]</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>1842</i>	<i>Charles Whittlesey to Tallmadge Coal Co.</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 6, Pg. 548]</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>1848</i>	<i>Sheriff of Summit Co. to Daniel Upson</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 14, Pg. 278]</i>
	<i>2</i>	<i>1852</i>	<i>Coal lease from Henry Houtz to William Harris</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 23, Pg. 25]</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>1853</i>	<i>Francis H. Wright to Daniel Upson</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 22, Pg. 439]</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>1856</i>	<i>Philo Wright to Philip Thomas</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 32, Pg. 371]</i>

<i>Tract</i>	<i>Lot</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>VI</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1856</i>	<i>Thomas Ellis to William Harris</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 31, Pg. 383]</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>1858</i>	<i>Daniel Upson to Philip Thomas</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 36, Pg. 342]</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>1865</i>	<i>Philo Wright to William Harris</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 31, Pg. 384]</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>1861</i>	<i>Coal mining by Evan Harris</i> <i>[Tallmadge Tax Duplicate]</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>1861</i>	<i>Coal mining by David Lewis</i> <i>[Tallmadge Tax Duplicate]</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>1861</i>	<i>Coal mining by David Owens & Thomas Ellis</i> <i>[Tallmadge Tax Duplicate]</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>1869</i>	<i>Polly Upson to Daniel Upson</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 98, Pg. 456]</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>1869</i>	<i>Polly Upson to Daniel Upson</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 98, Pg. 456]</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>1872</i>	<i>H. & H.E. Harris to Philip Thomas</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 79, Pg. 486]</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>1872</i>	<i>Wm. T. Owen to Philip Thomas</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 79, Pg. 490]</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>1880</i>	<i>Daniel Upson to Philip Thomas</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 117, Pg. 612]</i>
	<i>2</i>	<i>1882</i>	<i>John W. Ray to Philip Thomas</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 134, Pg. 145]</i>
	<i>3</i>	<i>1889</i>	<i>Coal Lease from James & Clarinda Upson & Wilber & Harriet Sanders to Philip Thomas</i> <i>[Lawrence Collection: Box 14, Folder 18, Item A1]</i>
		<i>1890</i>	<i>Coal lease from James Upson to Philip Thomas for all Tallmadge Coal Co. holdings in Tract VI</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 164, Pg. 296]</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>1902</i>	<i>Henry Thomas to Philip Thomas</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 279, Pg. 20]</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>1932</i>	<i>Steve Holic mining on land of Frances Thomas</i> <i>[Lawrence Collection, Box 14, Folder 20, Item A14]</i>
<i>VII</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>1843</i>	<i>E. C. Sackett to Daniel Upson</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 15, Pg. 343]</i>
<i>IX</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>1840</i>	<i>James Douglass to Tallmadge Coal Co.</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 1, Pg. 243]</i>
	<i>3</i>	<i>1840</i>	<i>Charles Whittlesey to Tallmadge Coal Co.</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 1, Pg. 240]</i>
		<i>1841</i>	<i>Clark Sackett to Tallmadge Coal Co.</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 6, Pg. 534]</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>1841</i>	<i>Charles Whittlesey to Tallmadge Coal Co.</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 2, Pg. 499]</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>1843</i>	<i>Ichabod Woodruff to Daniel Upson</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 6, Pg. 545]</i>
	<i>4</i>	<i>1845</i>	<i>C. & C.H. Whittlesey to Tallmadge Coal Co.</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 9, Pg. 584]</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>1845</i>	<i>C. & C.H. Whittlesey to Tallmadge Coal Co.</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 9, Pg. 584]</i>

<i>Tract</i>	<i>Lot</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>IX</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1845</i>	<i>C. & C.H. Whittlesey to Tallmadge Coal Co.</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 9, Pg. 584]</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>1856</i>	<i>Charles Whittlesey to Daniel Upson</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 31, Pg. 412]</i>
	<i>4</i>	<i>1856</i>	<i>Charles Whittlesey to Daniel Upson</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 31, Pg. 412]</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>1861</i>	<i>Coal mining by Tallmadge Coal Co.</i> <i>[Tallmadge Tax Duplicate]</i>
	<i>2</i>	<i>1861</i>	<i>Coal mining by Tallmadge Coal Co.</i> <i>[Tallmadge Tax Duplicate]</i>
	<i>6</i>	<i>1861</i>	<i>Coal mining by Tallmadge Coal Co.</i> <i>[Tallmadge Tax Duplicate]</i>
	<i>4</i>	<i>1861</i>	<i>Coal mining by Tallmadge Coal Co.</i> <i>[Tallmadge Tax Duplicate]</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>1861</i>	<i>Coal mining by Tallmadge Coal Co.</i> <i>[Tallmadge Tax Duplicate]</i>
<i>X</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>1840</i>	<i>Coal lease from Elizur Wright to Daniel Upson</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 1, Pg. 237]</i>
	<i>2</i>	<i>1851</i>	<i>Abner D. Hitchcock to William Harris</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 19, Pg. 15]</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>1855</i>	<i>Henry C. Fenton to Daniel Upson</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 30, Pg. 264]</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>1855</i>	<i>Henry C. Fenton to Daniel Upson</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 30, Pg. 264]</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>1860</i>	<i>Coal lease from Enoch Woodruff to Daniel Upson</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 40, Pg. 243]</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>1861</i>	<i>Coal mining by Francis H. Wright</i> <i>[Tallmadge Tax Duplicate]</i>
	<i>8</i>	<i>1862</i>	<i>Francis D. Alling to Daniel Upson</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 45, Pg. 104]</i>
	<i>2</i>	<i>1871</i>	<i>James W. Upson to Daniel Upson</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 75, Pg. 618]</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>1877</i>	<i>Geo. D. Bates, Trustee to Daniel Upson</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 105, Pg. 60]</i>
	<i>6</i>	<i>1879</i>	<i>James W. Upson to Daniel Upson</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 140, Pg. 21]</i>
	<i>10</i>	<i>1881</i>	<i>Coal mining by David Collum</i> <i>[Akron Daily Beacon, April 2, 1881, p.1, col.2]</i>
		<i>1890</i>	<i>Coal lease from James Upson to Philip Thomas for all Tallmadge Coal Co. holdings in Tract X</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 164, Pg. 296]</i>
	<i>5</i>	<i>1892</i>	<i>Wm. H. Upson to Daniel Upson</i> <i>[Summit Co. Recorder's Office, Vol. 198, Pg. 345]</i>
<i>XVI</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>1809</i>	<i>Coal discovered on land of Seth Meacham</i>

Appendix C: Miscellaneous Notes

In the process of reviewing materials for this project, a number of miscellaneous facts have been found relating to the coal industry in Tallmadge that, while certainly interesting, just didn't seem to fit in the discussion planned. Rather than "lose" them, it was decided to assemble them here for the reader's enjoyment.

The Beacon, November 3, 1852, p. 3 col. 1

"Big Chunks – At the recent Agricultural Fair of this County, was exhibited a rich specimen of Coal from the mines of Dr. Upson & Co., Tallmadge. One piece weighed 4,050 pounds, and another 3,300. The coal was of the best quality. The size of the lumps conveys a pretty good idea of the richness of the mines."

1860 Federal Census for Tallmadge, Summit County, Ohio

[Of the 192 families listed in the 1860 census for Tallmadge, the following individuals were the only ones to give "coal digger" or "coal miner" as their chief occupation. Note that the vast majority of these men were born in Wales.]

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Place of Birth</i>
<i>Thomas, John</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>Wales</i>
<i>Harris, Henry</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>Wales</i>
<i>Murray, John</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>Ireland</i>
<i>Murray, Peter</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>Ohio</i>
<i>Thomas, Philip</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>Wales</i>
<i>Davis, William</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>Wales</i>
<i>James, Richard</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>Wales</i>
<i>Richards, John</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>Wales</i>
<i>Williams, William</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>Wales</i>
<i>Thomas, Daniel</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>Wales</i>
<i>Hammontree, David</i>	<i>32</i>	<i>Wales</i>
<i>Harris, Henry</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>Wales</i>
<i>Murray, Henry</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>Ohio</i>
<i>Murray, William</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>Ohio</i>
<i>Trice, Thomas</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>Wales</i>
<i>Thomas, Samuel</i>	<i>39</i>	<i>Wales</i>

Akron City Directory, 1883-1884

[In the business section for Tallmadge the following individuals are identified as working in some phase of the coal industry.]

<i>Davis, William</i>	<i>farmer and collier</i>
<i>Price, William M.</i>	<i>collier</i>
<i>Rhymes, Thomas</i>	<i>collier</i>
<i>Roberts, Thomas</i>	<i>collier</i>

Tallmadge Coal Mines, Philip Thomas, proprietor, one mile west of Tallmadge Center: Miner and Shipper of Superior Quality Coal

“Old Mine Shafts Can Mean Tragedy”, Akron Beacon Journal, January 10, 1972

[One of the inherent dangers in living above old mining operations is the possibility of a sudden cave-in. Following is a partial transcript of a letter to the editor in which the writer describes his experience and expresses his concerns.]

“I witnessed such a cave-in at 209 Thomas rd., Tallmadge. My niece had just rented that property. They were driving a tractor across the back yard when the front end suddenly fell into a newly formed hole about two feet across and 20 feet deep. At the bottom can be seen clearly the beams of a shaft.

I understand that the area is zoned for commercial uses, including apartment buildings. I wonder what might happen some day if the bearing wall of an apartment building should suddenly be left without support because of erosion?

It seems to me that with all the electronic devices used today for finding mineral deposits and used by archaeologists for locating ruins that there ought to be an electronic device to locate and map out old mine shafts – before someone locates them via catastrophe.”

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The following sources were used in completing this project. Many of them were found in the Collection of Frank E. Lawrence housed at the Tallmadge Branch of the Akron Summit County Public Library system. Any source below that is followed with a bracketed notation beginning with "LC" and followed by a Box, Folder, and Page citation was found in Lawrence's collection.

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