



William E. Butt,  
Groceries, Country Produce and Coffins.

He was the first undertaker in the new settlement and conveyed the bodies in a springless wagon to the cemetery. Mr. Butt is fond of telling of the early experiences of the place and stated that when hired by superintendent Lathrop that Mr. Lathrop came over the mountains on horseback with his corps and laid out the town, after which he selected the spot to open the East mine and left Butt to cut the brush for the opening, after which the latter set up the first timbers, hung the first door and made the framework for the first shanty and built the first mine car. He worked for Mr. Lathrop until the explosion occurred in 1884, when he went into business. The wheels for the first mine car were brought over the mountains on mule back.

W. R. Graham, the present mayor of Pocahontas, who was one of superintendent Lathrop's surveyors, and Mr. Butt are the only two men left of the original founders of the town.

Superintendent Moody, who succeeded Mr. Lathrop, held the position eleven years; Harry John Rees, twelve years, was elected the second mayor of the town. The development of the region is phenomenal and the flat top coal field is now the most important in the United States and the quality of the coal is unsurpassed. The Pocahontas Collieries Co. several years since succeeded the Southwest Virginia Improvement Co., the oldest operator in the Pocahontas region. Recently this company has become closely identified with the Pocahontas Consolidated Company, President Isaac T. Mann of Bramwell, West Virginia; Jenkin Jones, vice president, and James El-Jones of Simmons, W. Va., and James Elwood Jones of North Fork, W. Va., general manager.

William Leckie, for several years foreman of the Nottingham colliery of the Lehigh & Wilkes-Barre Coal at Plymouth, is the present superintendent of the collieries of the company at the town of Pocahontas, where the recent accident occurred and where the company's main office and largest plant are located, on the Norfolk & Western Railroad. At this point there are four mines in operation. The company has its own machine shops, foundry, car shops and power station, water works, electric light plant, supply stores, commissary and cold storage plant and about 400 comfortable dwellings for its employees. At this mammoth colliery nearly every race and nationality is represented. There is a steady demand for all classes of men in the coal and coke business as well as for many skilled mechanics, electricians, etc.

Pocahontas is an incorporated town of about 5,000 inhabitants. It has a good municipal government, water works, electric lights, an excellent free school system, churches of all denominations and a number of progressive lodges and societies not found in any other town in the coal field. The location is ideal for health, being 2,300 feet above sea level. The cost of living is low, work is furnished every day in the year at fair wages. The social environments are excellent and labor disturbances practically unheard of.

The mines of Pocahontas Collieries Company at Pocahontas are capable of putting out from 4,000 to 6,000 tons per day. The coal is clean, averages 9½ feet high with good sound top.

The Pocahontas Collieries Co. is now busily engaged in opening its new mine

and coke plant at Boissevain, three miles west of Pocahontas, and expects in the near future to start developing two additional plants three or four miles west of Boissevain. These plants will be modern in every detail and will have a daily capacity each when running full of 3,000 to 4,000 tons of coal. The coal is known as the Pocahontas No. 3 vein, average 10 feet of clean coal with a good solid top.

The mines will be opened on the southern upheaval of the Pocahontas vein. The plants will be located in the valley of Laurel Creek on the new railroad now under construction from Pocahontas westward, known as the Pocahontas & Western Railroad, in the direction of the Berwind-White and Farraday properties, and which will in all probabilities be the main line of the Norfolk & Western Railroad in the near future, when the resources of the country adjacent to the new line are more fully developed and its numerous mining town built up.

At the Boissevain plant of the Pocahontas Collieries Company above referred to as being newly opened, a large number of comfortable dwellings have been erected, and more are under contract. A church is being built and a school building will be provided for at once. The dwellings are located on high lands, insuring good sanitation. They are convenient to the mines and store and are all lighted by electricity. A water system is also being installed and it bids fair to be the best mining town in the flat top coal field, considering from its healthful location, accessibility to the fertile fields and pastures of the famous Abbe Valley, running parallel with Laurel Creek for several miles.

Col. James Browning, who is the only individual operator in the town of Pocahontas, owns 2,000 acres of coal and timber land not far from Boissevain, as do also the Moore family, the pioneer family of Abbe Valley, a number of whom were killed there by the Indians in 1784. They own several thousand acres and Rowland Bryant, another old settler, has ninety acres and forty acres of white oak which will be developed as soon as the new railroad is completed. No mining country in the United States has a brighter future than the flat top region of Virginia.

William H. Grady, formerly of Nanticoke, and Walter Brennan, son of engineer Walter Brennan of Wilkes-Barre Heights, are on the mining engineering corps of the Pocahontas Collieries Co. and reside at Pocahontas.