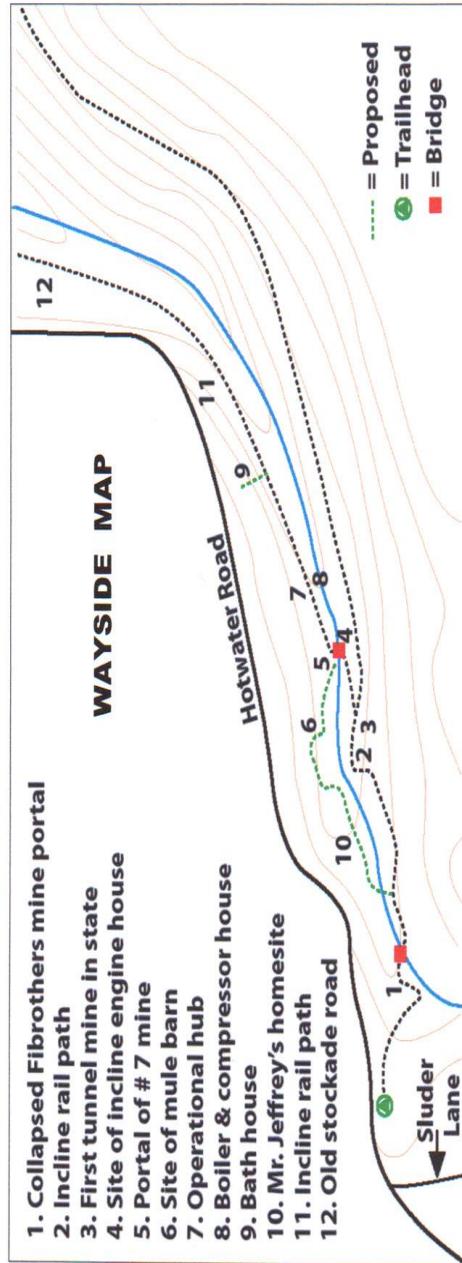


**SITE LOCATION MAP**



**SITE #1- FIBROTHER'S MINE**

The collapsed mine portal is one of two parallel shafts of the Fibrothers mine. The second portal is just around the bluff. These mines were established by the five local Millsap brothers about 1930 shortly after the Durham Coal Company collapsed in the Great Depression. The original name was the "Five Brother's Mine" but was quickly shortened to "Fibrothers". The second shaft was parallel to the first one, a rather unique mining technique for its time. The large slate piles across the stream are most probably the unburnable tailings from this mine.



**Ernest and Paul Millsap**

**SITE #2 – ORE CAR PATH**

After crossing the trailhead bridge, the trail follows a typical ore car rail path as evidenced by the coal residue along the way. This particular route was probably used to move coal down to the main incline, where they were coupled together in 30 car trains and then moved to the valley below. The coal was transported in a car similar to the one shown here. This car had a capacity of approx. 1 ton. It was pulled by mule while in the mine between the main tunnel and the work room of the miner. In the old days it was also pulled out of the mine by the mule, but in later years, electric cars were used to pull the cars out of the mines.



**Ore Car  
Reproduction**

**SITE #3 - THE FIRST MINE**

The first mine in the Soddy area was established in 1866 by the Soddy Coal Company. This mine is thought to have been the first tunnel mine in the State of Tennessee. The company was reorganized a number of times until around 1909 when it was bought out by the Durham Coal and Iron Company of the Carolinas, who operated until 1929, when it was forced to close because of the Great Depression. First, the coal was sent down to the base of the mountain via an incline cable rail system and then pulled by mule all the way to the Tennessee River. In the late 1870's a series of locks and dams were built to allow barges brought up Soddy Creek to the tippie at Long Spring, halfway to the river.



**Mine Entrance**

**SITE #4 - INCLINE ENGINE HOUSE**

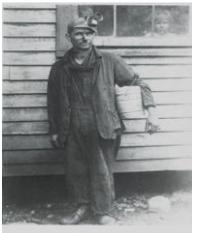
The structure located on the concrete foundation which supports this bridge was the Incline Engine House. It was from here that the train of coal cars was controlled on the descent and return down to the foot of the mountain. This was accomplished via the control of large drums upon which the cable was wound. These cables and tracks would have run in a straight line across the north side of old boiler house just downstream from the bridge. It should be noted that the stream was located south of this location, but was changed when the strip mining down from Clemmons pushed debris over the edge filling in the old stream bed. At one time, Mr. Levi operated this system. Mr. Tom Levi, formerly of Jones Gap Road, and a long time friend of the trail, is a descendant of the Mr. Levi.

**SITE #5 – NO. 7 MINE ENTRANCE**

No. 7 mine was the most productive mine in the valley and extended 2.5 miles into the mountain, to a point somewhere near the old Mowbray School, about ¾ miles east of the present day rod and gun club. At first the miners only had their head gear oil lamps for light, but about 1903 they were replaced with the carbide lamps. Later, electricity was run into the mines for light. Early on, the coal was removed by the use of hand tools, but later technology provided for the use of the coal cutting machine shown in the picture



**Inside No. 7**



**Typical Miner**

**SITE #6 – MULE BARN**

The barn to house the mine mules was located on this site. It was a unique structure in that the mules entered from the outside wall rather than down the center. Twenty four mules were housed on each side of the barn and a water trough ran down the middle. Water was brought in through a cast iron pipe from the stream, into the watering trough, and then emptied back into the stream below the barn. There was also a coal car track down the middle of the barn to bring in food for the mules. The Mule Barn Replica picture below is from the former Mr. Raymond Redden, mine area worker who resided at the intersection of Hotwater Road and Old Hotwater Road.



## SITE #7 – OPERATIONS HUB

This area was the operational hub of the mining that took place in the valley. It extended all the way to the Mule Barn to the west and east to where the incline starts down the mountain. As can be seen in the picture, it contained a rather extensive switching yard for the coal cars as well as the many structures to support the mining operation. It is believed that the two foundations to the left housed generators that produced electricity for the mines. Next came the blacksmith shop that was a vital part of maintaining the coal cars, tracks, mule shoes, miner's tools, etc. Next were the Tail Room and then the Engine House.

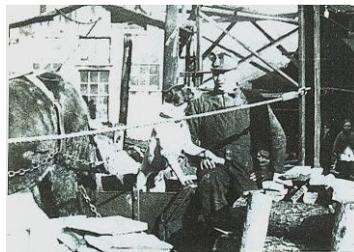


**Switch Yards At The Operations Hub**

## SITE # 8 – BOILER/COMPRESOR HOUSE

The boiler house was the main source of power for the mining operation in the valley. Eventually as mining technology improved this building also became the site of the various compressors. Water was taken out of the stream to operate the boilers.

The steam was used to operate various pieces of equipment, including air compressors, and eventually generators for electric power for the operations of the mine and various supporting structures.



## SITE #9 – MINERS WASH HOUSE

Up on the bluff only a small portion of miner's washhouse remains – a little bit of the concrete floor and a small portion of the rock footer. It was here where they would attempt to wash off the dirt and grime of a long day in the mines before returning home. Many miners and their families lived in company houses along Durham Street. Their day started early as they made their way up from the valley or down from the mountain, carrying their metal lunch cans, to be at their work station by 7:AM. Then after 9 hours in the semi-darkness of the mine, they exited by 4:PM, just prior to the blasting which would provide them coal to work the next day. Even lunch was taken in the semi-darkness of the mine, as it generally was a long trek out to reach daylight



**Typical Mining Tools**

## SITE #10 – JEFFREY HOMESITE

This is the site of Mr. Tom Jeffrey's dwelling. He is the only known person to reside in the Little Soddy Gulf during the mining era, except for a few African American families near the foot of the mountain. This was an ideal location for his homestead as he was the caretaker of the mules and the mule barn was just downstream from this location. The mules, along with the miners, were the lifeblood of the early mining operations, and so were given the best care possible. Mr. Jeffrey inspected each mule at the start of the day as well as making sure the harnesses were in good condition. At day's end, stationed at the mine's exit, he again checked each mule's harnesses and shoes.



## SITE #11 - INCLINE ORE CAR PATH

The length of incline was 7150 feet with an elevation change of 450 feet to Cincinnati Southern Railway at the foot of the mountain. It crossed the stream 7 times on the way to the base of the mountain. It was a single-track system with an up/down by-pass just below the point where the trail heads up the bluff to cross Hotwater Road. The by-pass was long enough to accommodate a 30 car train in both directions. It took 9 minutes for a 30 car train to make the trip to the bottom, with each car carrying 1 ton of coal. At the base of the incline was located the tipple, wash station, and eventually coke ovens.



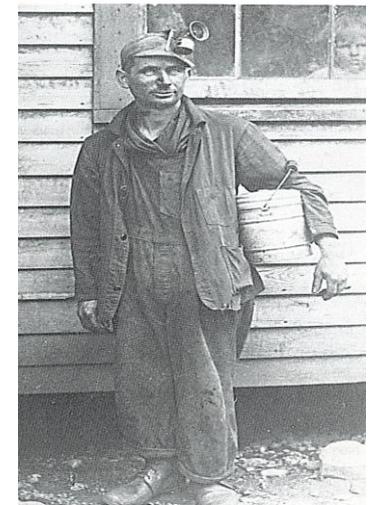
## SITE #12 – OLD STOCKADE ROAD

This road is the Old Stockade Road, so named for the old county prison once located near the western end of this road. The road was a branch off the road up to the top of Soddy Mountain. Prison labor was sometimes used to work in and around the coke ovens. During a number of mine strikes, the Chattanooga papers reported the mine operators threatening the unions with the use of prison labor to work the mines. However there is no record of this actually happening.

A similar situation at Coal Creek (Lake City), TN, resulted in what is known as the Coal Creek War when the then governor sent State Militia to oversee the use of prison labor in the mines. But the newly elected Governor Turney abolished the convict lease labor system in 1892.

## LITTLE SODDY COAL MINING

*The first commercial coal mining in this valley was founded by the Soddy Mining and Coal Company in 1866. The location of this mine is marked as Site #3. Many other historic sites involved with the mining operations here in this valley are also indicated in this brochure. It is said that at one point in time there were 800 people employed in the various facets of the mining operations, included but not limited to miners, coke oven operators, mule tenders, barge operators, dinky line train operators, explosive experts, coal washer operators, etc. It is hoped that this attempt to preserve the history of this valley will be a source of enjoyment to all.*



## CUMBERLAND TRAIL CONFERENCE