

Alabama Fuel & Iron Co - Part 5, Margaret, Acmar & Colgate

In 1936, the report includes a recount of the legal battle and trials for murder against one company employee. As noted previously this occurred when a group of union organizers came to Acmar and a gun battle occurred in which one organizer was killed. The two trials resulted in acquittals of all charged.

Production decreased slightly to 835,490 tons, all of this coming from



Miners and mules prepare to enter one of the mines in 1936. Mules were used to haul coal from the working face to the slope to be loaded on cars that were pulled up the slope by steam and later electric hoists. Mules were issued electric lamps to help prevent accidents. (Clemons, CoG Magazine)

the Henry Ellen operations, the company's share of state commercial production dropping to 12%.

At Acmar, the No 5 mine is producing 800 tons per day and is expected to continue. No 6 is producing 1200 tons per day and is using "old style" mine cars from No 2 and 3 mines which will be replaced in the future with more "modern, economical design" cars. The No 6 hoist had a new modern electric braking system installed, enabling savings in brake linings and improved safety. A bath house was built at Acmar.

No 3 New Acton is producing 325 tons per day, mostly from pillars, with an expected life of about 18 months. Even so, this is considered a high grade domestic coal. No 5 mine is producing 300 tons, also mostly from

pillar work, with a diminishing production over two more years.

With the expected closure of these mines, a new seam was explored and developed, beneath the existing seam. The new seam is 32" thick and good quality. A new slope, New Acton No 6, has been extended and entries are being driven to both sides. A temporary tippie was built and the coal is being sold as both steam and domestic, under the name New Acton "Fancy Lump", medium lump and nut coal. It is expected this seam can be mined with an "advanced long wall type operation".

At Margaret, the No 6 mine is producing over 1200 tons per day, with about 300 tons coming from No 8 (Brookston) mine. The No 3 mine was closed during 1936. A new steel and concrete tippie was built at the site of No 3's old tippie. No 6 mine continues to be extended with good results, using mining machines and mechanical loaders. The No 8 mine is producing about 700 tons per day, with roughly half being diverted via No 6 to No 3 for loading to the CoG and the balance to the SAL RR. It is noted that a new lamp house for the miners electric lamps was built on site to avoid the truck trip to the mine each day; a similar house was built at No 6 mine since No 3 was closed.

For 1937 the report says that one of the major problems of the year was "overt acts of labor organizations, by the Washington authorities", but that none of it "found fertile ground in our organization". Mines did not generally work full time with Acmar at 181 days, due to lack of RR business, Margaret and New Acton worked about 9 months. Production was up to 968,750 tons maintaining the position of largest commercial non-captive operation at nearly 17% of total. Profit per ton ranged from 26 cents for Margaret coal and 13 cents for New Acton. It is noted that since so many employees have electric refrigerators, the company's ice plant didn't earn any money. There are 145 families living at Overton and they are transported to work at Henry Ellen mines by company motor buses. Charles DeBardeleben, the president of the company lives at Overton. It is stated that Washington regulatory climate precludes the reopening of Overton.

At Acmar, the No 5 mine is producing at 750 tons per day, although all entries have reached their limits; production is expected to last three more years. A short slope is proposed for areas of the left outcrop to prolong the life of the mine and since the land here is owned rather than leased. No 6 mine is producing at a rate of 1200 tons per day, and expected to continue for some time. New workings to the right side of No 6 will be developed by a new slope about 1 mile to the right of the current slope which will be driven from inside the current cross entries. This new slope will be called Acmar No 7. The coal from this slope will be hauled by electric locomotive to the No 6 tippie.

No 3 New Acton is producing 225 tons per day, from pillars, and will be worked to exhaustion as the domestic market likes the coal and there is strong demand. No 5 New Acton is producing only 150 tons per day, from robbing as well. Both mines are expected to close in 1938.

The New Acton No 6 slope, on a new seam at a lower level beneath the existing mines did not produce the quality coal expected and was abandoned during 1937. It is stated that the market wouldn't accept this coal as "Acton" quality.

Margaret No 6 is producing 1,000 to 1,300 tons per day, including about 250 tons from Brookston (No 8) mine. No 6 continues to be extended

using mechanical mining methods and is producing "the best grade of steam and domestic coal... ever sent out o the market".

A new Margaret slope was developed during the year located between No 3 (closed) and No 6, to be called No 9. This mine is accessing 100 acres of coal previously cut off by a thrust fault from adjacent workings. The new slope is at 350 tons per day expected to reach 500 tons daily, the coal being hauled to No 6 tipple on the same track as the No 6 coal.

Brookston (No 8) slope is producing 600 to 900 tons per day, depending on demand and divided between SAL and CoG. It is noted that Brookston has developed a good truck trade for counties nearby without rail service. A truck scale was installed and a new loading bin added - this lump coal brings the highest price of domestic coals. A modern bath



Top: Doctor's office, right and Community House, left at Acmar.

Bottom: Tipple at Margaret with car dump on the right, screening plant, middle and truck loading on the left, c 1944. (Denney, Explosive Engineer Magazine)

house was built at No 8 to maintain even policy with the other mines, using a small monthly fee from miners to pay for the upkeep.

At Colgate the plants are performing well. The electrical plant having 3 steam turbine generators of 3500, 1500 and 1250 KW each. New circuit breakers were installed during the year. The shop continues its work with the ability to do all electrical repairs and rework in house, for armatures, motors or transformers as well as welding.

The report for 1938 states "the coal industry is probably the sickest industry in our entire country... attempts at legislation... resulting in only increasing the cost of production... [enabling] laborless fuels to take our business". There was a business decline which in turn reduced railroad demand, AF&ICo's main business, although some new rail customers were gained.

A relationship was formed this year with the Galloway Coal Co to be their sales agent for their Elk River Coal, a high grade domestic coal. This was done due to the New Acton coal being nearly exhausted --

about one years production is expected at 200 tons per day. The relationship enables the existing sales force to sell Elk River as part of their regular rounds so the commission on sales doesn't cost the company anything. The truck business at Margaret is increasing with a cash price at the mine of 25 cents per ton above the price for coal sold by rail.

A new production method for Margaret has been implemented which machine cuts the rock "parting" rather than the coal itself. This required new Arc Wall mining machines and results in much cleaner coal. In addition, the Acmar miners are being admonished to mine cleaner coal, to aid their own workload, cleaner coal being easier to sell at lower cost. Overall, the profits for the year 1938 are driven for the most part by Margaret to the tune of 10 to 1. Coal profits amount to less than half the company total, outweighed by combined commissary profits, royalties, rents, electricity for lights, and miscellaneous. A new power line was extended 1.5 miles to the adjacent Red Diamond mines selling them power at 1 cent per KW. It is noted that a new connection was made from Acmar to the SAL Parsons Siding to enable the company to sell Acmar coal to the SAL directly.

It is noted that a total of \$1.5 million in law suits were pending against the company related to claims on labor issues, such as harassment or intimidation. Nearly all the cases were tried and won in lower courts but were going to be pursued at the Supreme Court. The company's lawyers offered a \$7,500 dollar settlement which was successful, greatly improving the company's legal situation.

The company implemented a program for employee suggestions for saving money, with a cash prize awarded to three winners before Christmas (\$25, \$15 & \$10). This was deemed very successful and expected to be continued. The ongoing program of farming company land continued with good results. A new program was started to eliminate venereal disease in the mine communities. Blood tests were given and of those infected, treatment was given by doctors. A blood test was added to the physical exam required for new employees.

The company implemented kindergartens in the company schools in order to prepare children better for first grade. Christmas gifts were given to 1800 children as well as Christmas trees.

At Acmar, the No 5 mine is producing 750 tons per day, all from a careful plan of robbing pillars and other blocks of coal. The new slope at No 5 outcrop is being worked successfully, known as No 5 cross slope, at 175 tons per day, being loaded out at No 5 tipple. No 6 Acmar is at a rate of 1200 tons per day, developing new territory on the right, known as Acmar No 7. This new slope is now connected from the surface to the No 6 third right entry, a distance of 1,000 feet. It is planned to build a new electric surface haulage from No 7 to No 6 tipple. Additional ventilation was required to be added at Acmar due to the extensive length of mine workings.

At New Acton, No 3 mine is being exhausted by robbing, with careful prep work required to maintain quality. This mine is expected to close during 1939. No 5 mine was closed in November, 1938. With the failure of the No 6 effort, it is expected that New Acton coal will be gone in 1939. Current efforts are not able to meet domestic demand.

Margaret No 6 is producing 1200 tons per day including 200 tons from No 8 Brookston. No 9 mine is producing 450 tons per day, using the No

6 tipple for dumping. No 6 continues to extend with good results.

During the year a Jeffrey Arcwall coal cutting machine was purchased. Its value is that it will cut a "soft rock parting in the coal and enable the miner to load cleaner coal, with more in lump and domestic sizes." This coal supports the expanding truck trade of Margaret coal. A new 100 ton truck loading bin was added to the No 6 tipple with a loading boom and conveyor system from the tipple.

A new air shaft was required to be sunk 385 feet to the face of the No 6 slope. A new 8 foot diameter Sturdivant fan of 110,000 cu ft capacity from Overton is being installed.

Brookston (No 8) is producing 400 to 600 tons per day, with demand being split between SAL and CoG via the No 6 tipple. The truck trade for domestic coal continues at this tipple as well.

The Colgate plants are all serving well and the sale of power to the Red Diamond mine is producing \$5,000 per year. The shop continues to serve for repairs and rebuilding.

The 1939 report to shareholders starts with a 10 year comparison showing coal production having returned to pre-depression levels at 962,830 tons. The company is noted as still being the largest commercial non-captive coal operation and the only one that is non-union. The report adds that New Acton is exhausted, and that it consistently raised the average sales price per ton for the company. A coal strike in 1939 contributed to the increase in sales, as had been the case in 1937 - New Acton coal being shipped as far away as Massachusetts during 1939. It was the main domestic coal for AF&ICo, commanding a high price.

Significant capital expenditures involved housing repairs, rebuilding and moving houses from Overton to Margaret. In addition significant amounts were spent on Acmar No 6 & 7 as well as Margaret No 2 & 6. Expenses were made for churches, schools, doctor's office, post office, a community hall and a couple of wagon bridges on Black Creek.

Acmar No 5 is producing 700 tons per day, and the cross slope (left) improvement here is producing 200 tons per day. No 6 is producing 1200 tons per day, enabled by installation of a 600 HP Nordberg hoist brought from Overton, along with a new hoist house and generator room moved from New Acton No 6. No 7 continues to be extended from cross entries of No 6 slope. A new surface haulage and tipple to connect to No 6, using an 8 ton electric locomotive from New Acton. A new 750 HP Hardie-Tynes hoist was purchased from Southern Mineral Land Co's Straven mine for No 7, and a 110,000 cu ft Jeffrey fan from was relocated from No 4 Overton. Other improvements at Acmar included a new Doctor's office, Tea Room and renovated Community house and a new "negro" school.

New Acton mines are noted as just about exhausted and expected to close in early 1940. Domestic customers will be offered domestic size coal from the other operations.

At Margaret, the No 6 tipple is handling 1200 tons per day which includes about 150 tons diverted from Brookston (No 8). Margaret No 9 is producing 350 tons and is expected to last 2-3 more years. Anticipating the end of No 9, a decision was reached to dewater and reopen Margaret No 2, idle since about 1920; initial production is expected in early 1940. This reopening is enabled by the use of machine mining

techniques not in use in 1920. No 6 slope continues to develop and required a new ventilation shaft 585 deep serving an 8 foot Sturdivant fan of 110,000 cu ft capacity (moved from Overton). The 29 U model Jeffrey Arcwall cutting machine continues to be successful and another may be purchased. Truck sales from Margaret are being focused at No 6 tipple, No 8 truck loadings being discontinued. No 6 truck loadings support a full time man and lump coal is being stored for winter sales. 29 rebuilt houses were moved from Overton and with other improvements made to existing housing.

Brookston (No 8) is operating at over 400 tons per day, depending on SAL purchases. As usual, surplus production is moved underground to No 6 tipple. The only truck sales at No 8 now are small amounts of steam coal sizes not prepped at No 6. Efforts are underway to extend No 8 through a down throw fault of about 15 feet for future development. Additional prospecting indicates that this will work.

Colgate plants and shops continue to serve well. With additional electric hoisting installed it is expected that peak demand will exceed the 3500 KW capacity. A new plan to purchase peak load power from Alabama Power is underway, with Colgate buying power at peak times, and selling power at low demand times.

Company records for 1940 do not include the presidents report, but do include the informative operations report from General Manager F. R. Bell. It is noted that the Overton rail spur has been removed by CoG RR, but that 170 families are living at Overton and working at Acmar or Margaret, riding in company trucks at no charge.

At Acmar, No 5 is working a double shift to produce 1000 tons per day, driven by a favorable market. The No 5 cross slope is beginning to rob pillars as planned, and will likely be exhausted during 1941. The No 5 main slope is expected to last 2-3 years more but is producing based on robbing. Miners began using 275 new electric mine lamps, to replace the former electric lamps in use. No 6 Acmar is producing 1600 tons per day, also working a night shift, including about 100 tons from No 7 slope which is being developed. No 6 slope is advancing but appears to be reaching the vertical fault that is found throughout the Henry Ellen basin and creates a limit to all the mines. Even so, cross entries are being extended and the mine is expected to last for "some years to come". No 7 mine is now connected to No 6 tipple by an overland electric haul way using an 8 ton GE motor; output is expected to reach 600-700 tons per day. This mine received 350 new electric miner lamps.

The No 6 headframe was rebuilt with creosoted timber, the former 10 year old structure being replaced. A 65 steel pan conveyor was also rebuilt at No 6 tipple. A new rock dump system to accommodate increasing output from No 7 is being considered.

The New Acton mines are now worked out, and the company is reopening No 4 Henry Ellen, a mine predating AF&ICo closed about 1903. The mine accesses the Mammoth aka Acmar seam; this seam had a "middle-man" layer of rock that was not easily handled by hand mining. However, the coal below this rock layer, part of the main seam, is considered valuable as domestic coal to replace the New Acton coal in the market. Reopening the mine will require dewatering, then returning to the face some 900 feet down the slope.

At Margaret, the No 6 mine is producing 1200 tons per day, including

output from Brookston (No 8) not required by SAL. No 9 mine is producing 250 tons per day, a reduced amount and retreat robbing of pillars and blocks is beginning. No 6 mine is continuing to develop new territory after encountering faulty areas. The old No 2 mine is beginning to produce after being idled about 1920. The mine output will utilize an electric locomotive line to the No 6 tipple using 60# rail. It is noted that an underground reinforced concrete dam was built between the reopened No 2 and old idle No 1 workings. This dam will hold back drainage from No 1 and reduce pumping costs for reopened No 2, which will use a new 1350 gallon per minute, 650 foot head pump, located in 15th left entry. Discharge will be via a new cast iron discharge laid some 5000 feet to the surface. In addition two new ventilation air returns were implemented. 100 new Edison Model "P" cap lamps were purchased, and a new lamp house built, along with a foreman's office and first aid room. Margaret mine housing is requiring maintenance and a number of new metal roofs.

Brookston (No 8) is producing 400-500 tons per day, depending on SAL demand. Surplus coal is moved underground, hauled out and dumped at No 6 tipple. Brookston was extended through a fault, noted previously, and is working well. No 8 washer required updating.

At Colgate, all plants and shops are serving well. The new APCo connection has been brought in from Leeds and enables peak power to be bought and surplus power to be sold to APCo.

It is noted that the farming program continues, as well as the welfare societies, "through which the employees conduct their collective bargaining... affecting wages, hours and condition of employment". These groups are separate for white and colored employees and meet monthly to discuss issues. A long standing monthly management meeting is also held.

Prior to the March, 1941 Board meeting, for the year 1940, a letter dated March 18, 1941, was received by the Board from Charles F DeBardeleben, expressing his regret for not being able to attend due to an ongoing illness. The letter shows an effort to be aware and involved in the ongoing activities of the company.

Charles F DeBardeleben died August 31, 1941. The Board responded formally with a resolution at a meeting September 18, 1941. Business moved forward with the election of [son] Prince DeBardeleben as the new President of the company, at a salary of \$18,000 per year. The new president began his work with an outline of the work being done for a new Acmar No 8 mine, expecting \$40,000 in new capital expense. Charles F DeBardeleben, Jr. [son]



Prince DeBardeleben, President and R. C. McClain, Supt. Of Mines, Acmar. (Denney, Explosives Engineering Magazine, 1944.

was elected to the Board, and a pension was approved for the former President's widow.

The annual report for **1941** includes the traditional report by the President stating that the company produced 1,219,346 tons, the largest output since 1925. Output in 1941 came from six mines, 3 each at Acmar and Margaret. It was noted that Margaret properties are completely developed and now new mines may be opened. Labor conditions due to the war and defense employment are difficult. Also Margaret coal is becoming ever more difficult to mine due to rock layers. Miners must work harder to produce a ton of coal and longer haulage takes more time, both reducing efficiency and output. Overall, wages have been higher and efficiency lower, causing a reduction in profit. Truck sales at Margaret added significantly to income, since no transportation is required and truck coal is sold at domestic prices. The company also continues to market the Elk River domestic and steam coal of the Galloway Coal Co in Walker County. A new laboratory has been built at Colgate so that daily tests may be made on washed coal by a chemist jointly employed by the CoG and AF&ICo providing better quality evaluation.

The operations report by Mr. Bell indicates that the two tipples at Overton were dismantled in 1941. Materials not already relocated were stored on site and materials from the old tipples were used to construct the new No 8 Acmar tipple.

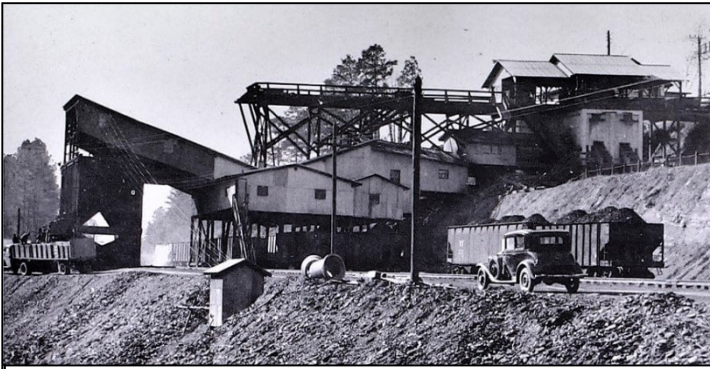
Acmar No 5 is producing 550 tons per day, a reduction due to working out the No 5 cross slope and "squeeze" on the main No 5 slope. This caused roof failures and a reduction in coal expected to be recovered from robbing pillars. A reduced production of 400 tons per day was predicted for 2 more years.

No 6 Acmar is producing 1650 tons per day, by itself plus 700 tons per day from No 7 slope, the total being dumped over the No 6 tipple. No 6 has reached the vertical fault as predicted, although cross entries are still extending.

No 7 slope is still being extended, now at 2500 feet from the surface, with production from the extending face as well as right side entries into new territory. A new rock disposal system has been installed with a rotary dump and 36" conveyor to dispose of rock from both slopes without interfering with coal production. In addition, labor at the tipple decreased from 2 men to 4. Additional ventilation was added as required. The steel pan conveyor at this site was replaced with a 36 belt conveyor after constant maintenance.

The No 8 Acmar slope, former Henry Ellen No 4 (closed 1903) has been pumped out, slope renovated and ventilation installed. New territory is being developed, working only the lower portion of the Mammoth (aka Acmar) seam. A retreating long wall mining method is being implemented here, using cutting machines. This means that entries are extended to their limits, and then the seam is worked back toward the main slope along it's face. A new tipple is being built at this mine, and the coal is expected to serve the domestic market mainly by truck. The new tipple will accommodate truck storage. Rail cars are also being served with the new tipple. Production is expected to reach 700 to 800 tons per day.

A gas explosion at No 6 Acmar killed 11 men, due to a spark from a



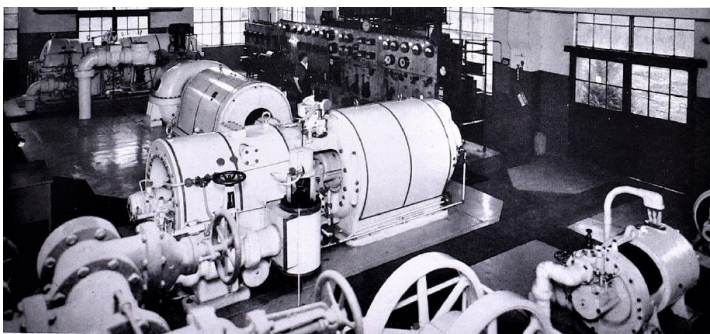
Acmar No 8 tipple, likely the last tipple to be built. The head house and dump on the right, screening house in the middle, with loadout to rail cars below and the truck dump on the left. Truck sales continued to grow during the 1940's. (Denney, Explosives Engineer, 1944)

switch on a hoist motor. Spark proof switches are to be installed with more frequent inspections for gas.

Margaret No 6 is producing 100 tons per day. SAL is taking nearly all the coal from No 8 (Brookston) so little coal is being transferred to No 6. No 6 is experiencing large rock partings in the left workings but favorable conditions on the right, so work is focusing in that direction. Mining machines continue in use here, producing a high grade lump coal that is selling well to the truck market. No 9 Margaret is down to 200 tons per day and is expected to be exhausted in 1942. No 2 mine (reopened) is continuing to develop well at 500 tons per day and experiencing good mining conditions. This mine is also going to be utilizing retreating long wall techniques. It is stated that this method takes longer to start up, but once in place, efficiency is better. No 8 (Brookston) is noted at 450 tons per day, but that production is expected to begin to decrease with robbing begun on upper workings; several more years are predicted.

At Colgate the plants and shops continue to perform well. The arrangement with APCo is paying dividends as they needed power due to dry weather impacting hydro generation. Nearly one million KW were sold to the power company each month at six mills per KW.

All company programs for and with employees are continuing. The



Colgate Power Plant in the early 1940's (Denney, Explosives Engineer Magazine, 1944)

Welfare Societies continue to serve as in-house collective bargaining organizations. It is noted that selective service and defense work are drawing workers away. In addition the C.I.O. union reps continue to try to interest workers in organizing.

The President's report to the Board for year **1942** shows company production at 1,203,102 tons, a bit less than 1941, the new Acmar No 8 (old Henry Ellen No 4) contributing to the highest Acmar production in company history. It is noted that the Margaret operations are tenuous due to poor coal and longer haulage. Margaret is considered questionable but for the war effort. Truck sales continue to increase at both Margaret and Acmar locations. Fuel and tire rationing may have an impact on this. Power sales to APCo may have peaked; 1942 was a wet year and the power company brought two new steam plants on line. Elk River coal sales (by commission) for Galloway Coal Co are up.

In 1942, AF&ICo came under investigation by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), through the first half of the year. The company was taken to Federal Court on complaints of intimidation and other charges over some years. The result was AF&ICo agreed to a series of stipulations and decrees issued by the NLRB. The president noted "there was no question of our being guilty of intimidation and other charges, from their viewpoint... we agreed to the stipulations... issued by the NLRB". These required the company to "cease and desist from the negative practices... and to take positive action such as rehiring men discharged for Union activities, paying back pay, abandoning the Welfare Societies as labor organizations, and to void the written contracts with these organizations... we agreed to all of these conditions...". It is stated that a labor disruption is likely during 1943, and that if a wage increase is granted to the unions, then AF&ICo will have to go along. Reference is made to the Office of Price Administration and price adjustments being crucial if wages increase and companies are to survive.

The General Manager's report indicates nearly 200 families living at Overton (closed) and working at the Henry Ellen sites. All programs for employees are being carried out here as well.

On December 28, 1942, an extremely heavy rain flooded Acmar No 5 and No 8 (Henry Ellen No 4) with water. These two mines were put out of operation, and are expected to be back in business by mid February 1943. Miners were moved to a third shift at No 6 and No 7 mines, with 3 seven hour shifts, keeping most working, losing about 15% tonnage.

No 5 Acmar was producing 350 tons per day before flooding and is expected to be out of production by the end of 1943. A new electric hoist was installed and the water tube boilers used for steam hoisting were moved to Colgate, increasing steam capacity from worn out boilers.

No 6 mine is producing 1600 tons per day, plus 600 tons from No 7 slope at the No 6 tipple, for all shifts. Although the No 6 slope reached the vertical fault, the entries at this depth are doing well on both sides. Pumping improvements in the lower workings have proved satisfactory with good capacity for the remainder of the mine's life. No 7 slope is still being extended forward and right side entries are proving out well. The conveyor improvements at No 6 tipple are working out very well.

It is noted that creek water below Colgate washer could not be used at the bath house at No 6 mine, due to acid and coal dust from the washer discharge. A new pump and water line, and two ponds were installed from the Cahaba River to remedy this.

No 8 Acmar is developing well, producing 750 tons per day when the flood occurred at the end of 1942. The slope is at 2300 feet, and cross entries are being extended then mined successfully using long wall

techniques. Two new Jeffrey Longwall Coal Cutters were purchased and are producing a large percentage of lump coal but undercutting the longwalls. Production is expected to resume mid February, 1943, and then full production in another 60 days.

Margaret No 6 is producing 750 tons per day. All coal at No 8 (Brookston) is being used by SAL RR. Production at No 6 is reduced due to reduction in labor hours by the NLRB, and a shortage of experienced miners. Inexperienced labor is being recruited with difficulty, most workers finding defense industry jobs. Also the mining is apparently not considered desirable work as the coal quality is poor, requiring movement of much rock by hand. An auxiliary slope is being developed in the right side that is proving to be very good quality. No 9 Margaret is losing production as it is worked out, although several old slopes adjacent are being worked to the best advantage. All work at No 9 is expected to end in 1943. No 2 Margaret is at reduced production of 600 tons per day for the same reasons stated for No 6. The development continues into good coal but additional pumping will be required due to water coming from the old No 1 mine. No 8 (Brookston) is robbing in the upper entries and accessed from No 6 left for the lower production to continue. No extension of the No 8 slope is planned and life is predicted at 2 years, with production of 300 tons per day expected in 1943.

Company programs are continuing as in the past. It is expected that the ongoing farming program will expand due to national food shortages and rationing. Welfare societies continue to meet (no longer as collective bargaining) where ideas are discussed with employees on efficiency and other issues. Labor shortages are becoming acute as defense industries are working overtime with "fancy overtime wages" and NLRB is apparently placing limits on mining hours, restricting overtime. Safety supervision costs are the highest in history and full time safety inspectors are on the job monitoring ventilation and other safety personnel at all mines. Nevertheless, the "spirit of our employees continues to measure up... [reflecting] years of fair dealings that are appreciated by our employees".

The President's report for 1943 indicates that production was down due to the manpower shortage, as well as the impacts of the December, 1942, floods which reduced production for at least the first quarter of 1943. Impacts at Acmar No 8 were so significant that entries had to be reopened, track relayed, timbers replaced and roof falls dug out. The Margaret area has no new mines to develop and stripping operations are beginning at Brookston. The small mines at Margaret No 9 and 11 will be worked out early in 1944. Acmar mines No 5 will finish in 1944 and No 6 is on the retreat robbing. No 7 is at full production, being completely developed. A new mine at Acmar No 9 has just opened, and will be served by truck haulage to the No 8 tippie. Truck haulage is stated to be efficient up to 500 tons per day, then rail haulage is better. Truck sales (different from haulage) are continuing to grow, with "trucks in line night and day, seven days a week, waiting for coal". Galloway Coal Company's Elk River and Jagger coal sales on commission basis continue to grow. Labor relations are said to be good, and it is noted that the Associated Miners (union) have "a large number of our employees in their organization... [and have been notified by NLRB] that they will be granted an election to prove they represent a majority of the employees. The UMW are resisting this election and have intervened at every step... after the election, regardless who wins, we will

have to make a contract with whoever represents the majority of our employees."

The General Manager's operating report notes that 200 miners are still living at Overton and being trucked to work at Acmar and Margaret by the company. No 5 Acmar is producing 250 tons per day and is expected to be finished by the end of 1944, the effective life being extended by reduced production due to flooding. No 6 Acmar is producing 1500 tons per day, including 350 tons from No 7 slope, being hauled overland by electric motor to No 6 tippie. No 7 is only working one shift due to labor shortage, while No 6 is working a double shift. No 7 has reached its planned limits, with cross entries being developed on the right and both sides of No 6. Although faulty areas are being found it is planned to go to the planned limits of these mines. No 6 will begin robbing some pillars in 1944 which is expected to reduce production. The double shift work over 3 years is depleting No 6 faster than might have been expected. Based on this it is said to be imperative to develop Acmar No 8 (old Henry Ellen) and the new No 9 mine as soon as possible. Two used 10-ton Autocar trucks have been purchased to haul from No 9 to No 8 tippie. No 8 mine has been "cleaned up" from the flooding and is back to 750 tons per day production. Clean up was more extensive and difficult than anticipated.

It is noted that the mining at Acmar No 8 has been changed from longwall system back to room and pillar. It seems that the middle-man parting in the Acmar seam was too poor to maintain a roof system for the lower bench of the seam. By changing back to room and pillar, both the upper bench and lower may be mined, although the miners will have to handle more rock from the parting. It will enable 50% more coal to be mined once the old system is restored.

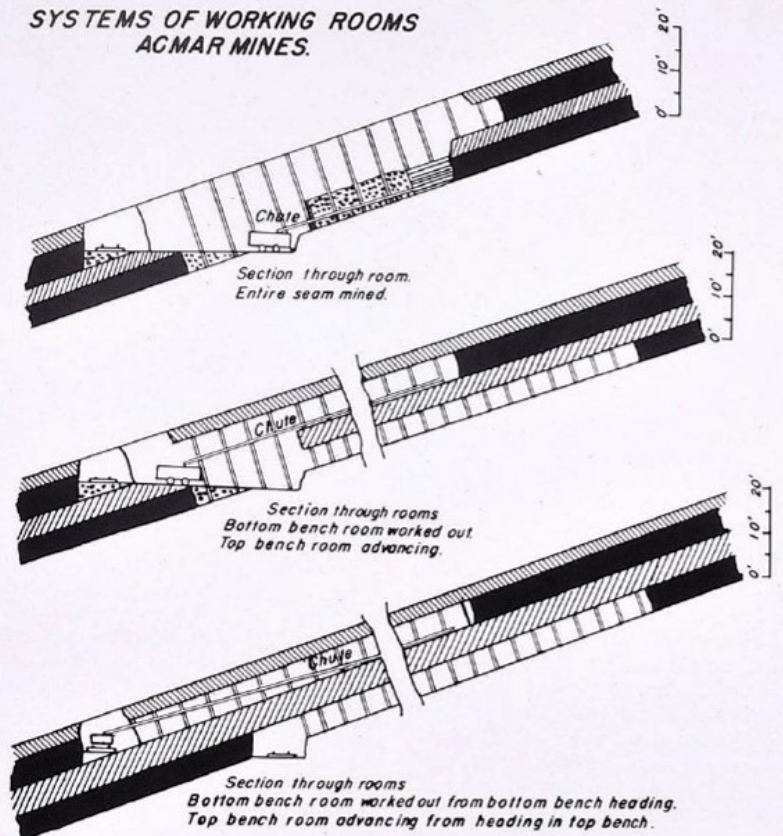
At Margaret No 6 production is at 550 tons per day, reduced due to shortage of manpower. No 6 is extending forward as well as to the south side while determining the quality of material and the expectations for the life of this mine. Since the retreating No 8 (Brookston) mine drains to No 6 and will have its pumps dismantled soon, a new drainage system was added at No 6. This required an 8 inch bore, 390 feet deep and two 500 gallon per minute Worthington pumps at the 14th right heading with a large sump to collect and remove water from No 6 and No 8's contribution.

Margaret No 2 (reopened) is producing 650 tons per day, also reduced due to labor shortage. Forward work has stopped while headings are extended. A "back slope" is being developed on the north side of No 2. No 2 is expected to eventually be developed to its planned limits. As No 2 continues to grow additional ventilation will be required. No 9 slope is being exhausted, including "several old slopes" that were developed near No 9. No 8 (Brookston) is producing 250 tons per day, nearly all from robbing on retreat, and reduced production is driven by labor shortage. No 8 is expected to be exhausted during "next year", but stripping along the adjacent outcrop is being investigated using a power shovel, anticipating 125,000 tons of coal available.

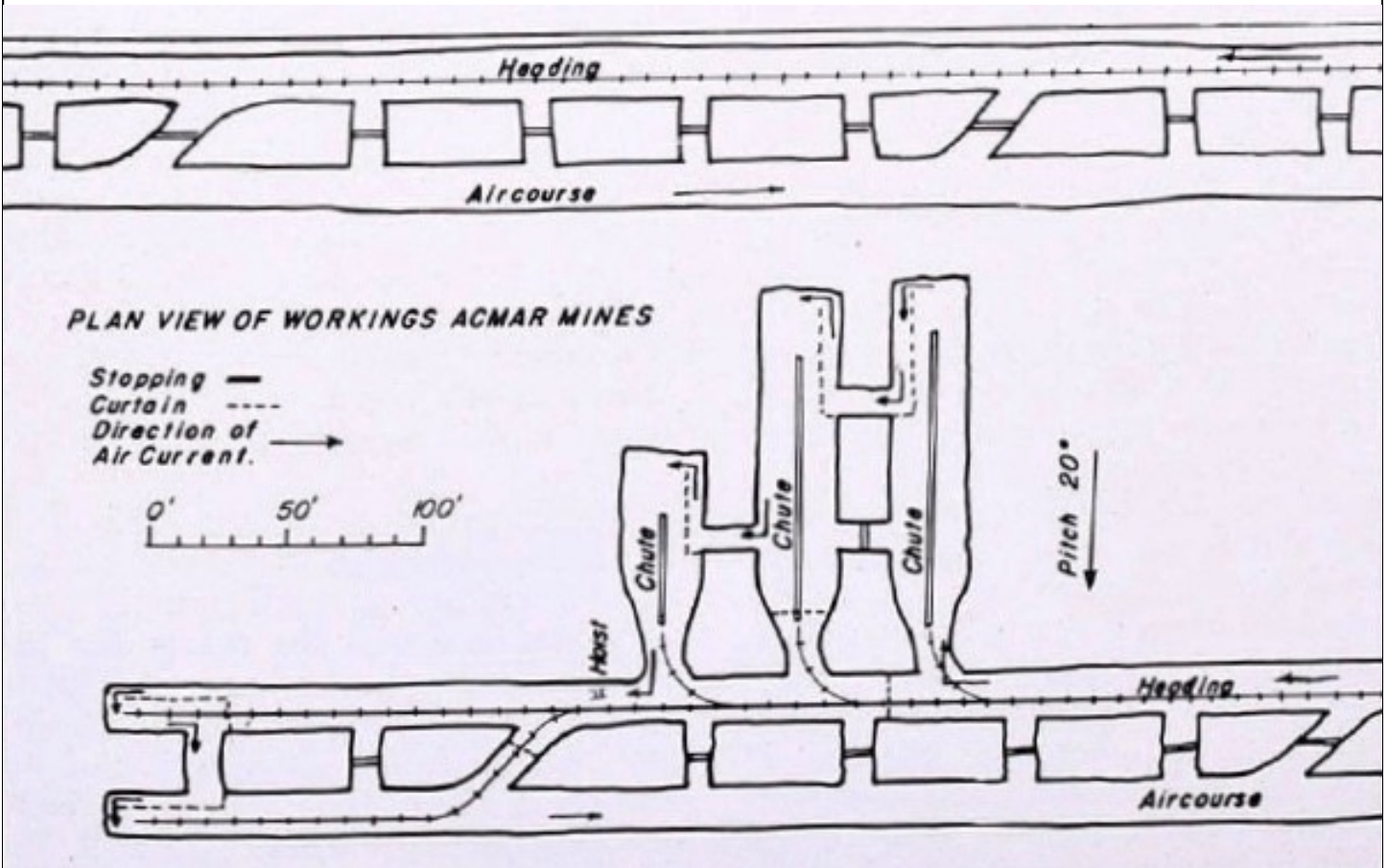
The Colgate plants and shops are in good shape. The laboratory is continuing operation for daily sampling (jointly with the CoG). The 1500 KW generator at Colgate has been rewound, and a "considerable amount of power has been sold to Alabama Power" during the year. Boilers moved from Acmar No 5 in 1942 have been brought on line are



SYSTEMS OF WORKING ROOMS ACMAR MINES.



Miners working the "Big Seam", note the chute between the men bringing coal down from the working face. The Big Seam [Mammoth] was about 11 feet thick with a top and bottom "bench" separated by a layer of rock. Different methods were used as shown in the section view in the right image. This appears to be the method in the top diagram. In the bottom diagram we see this in plan view. Note the typical slope (pitch) of 20 degrees. (Denney, Explosives Engineer Magazine, 1944)





improving efficiency as planned.

Employee programs continue at all locations. An enhanced safety program has placed a "safety man" with each 20 employees, there is now a Safety Inspector as well as a mine foreman working on safety issues daily, particularly checking ventilation and sampling air quality. It is noted that over 400 employees have been drafted in the military, plus an equal number leaving for defense plant work. Draft boards have begun to be more lenient regarding miner deferments, but "most of the best miners were drafted before they became lenient on the miners". It is noted that "most of our oldest and most substantial employees have stayed with their jobs... this is one evidence of good feelings... between our Company and its employees of long standing -- that could not be bought with higher wages elsewhere."

The corporate record at Hoole Library, UA, contains the President's annual report, but no General Manager's report for **1944**. This report begins with a summary of 4 years showing that although annual production has decreased, income has increased due to increased sales prices, but that production cost increased at a greater rate than sales price reducing profit.

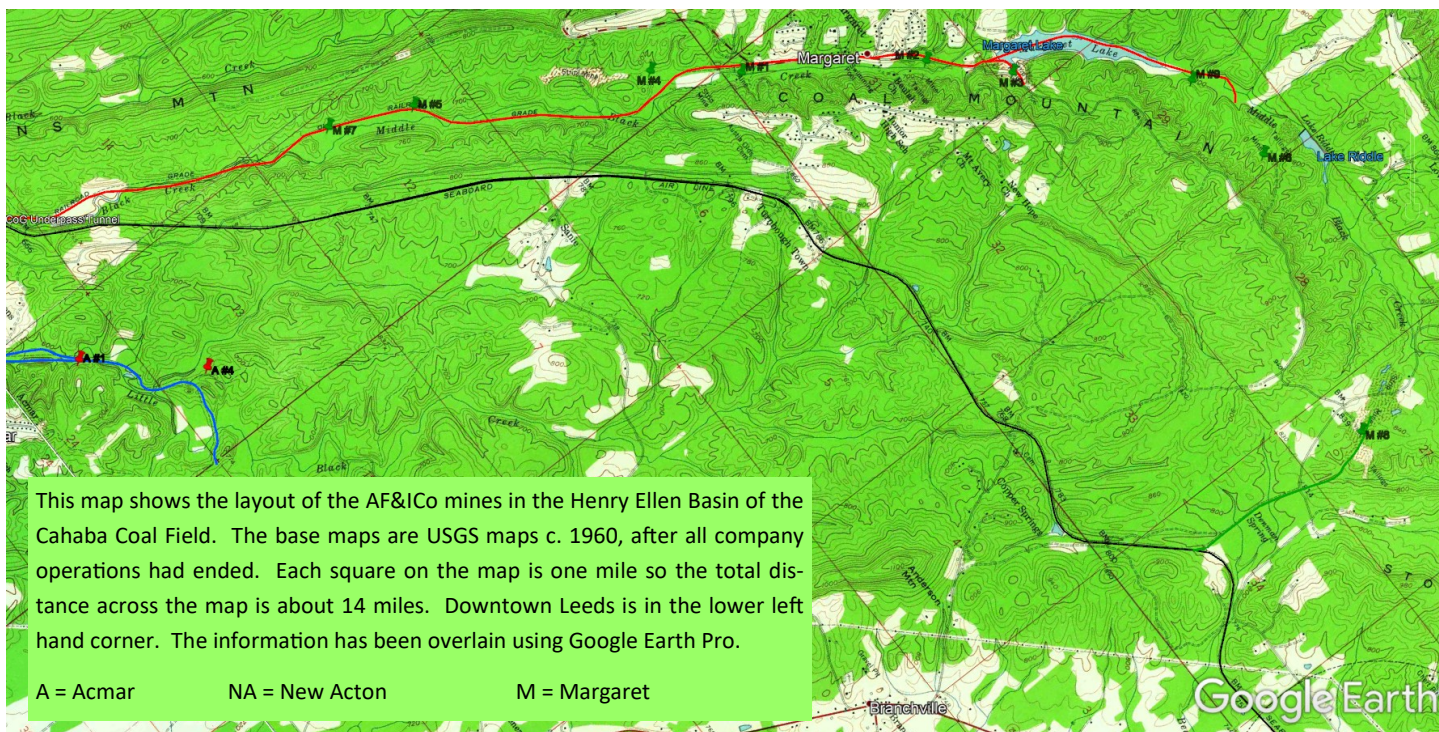
Margaret Division made money during the year "due to the fact that the Office of Price Administration (OPA) gave us a maximum selling price... of \$4.05 per ton against an Acmar price of \$3.70." Margaret No 8 is still operating and is expected to continue through 1945. No 2 mine is the largest mine now extending some 2 miles along the slope, which means that ventilation is an ongoing problem. Thus, a new high pressure fan has been installed, producing the same volume with half the power requirements. No 2 is running only a single shift, and if labor were available two shifts could be run to improve production. A barrier pillar existing between No 2 and old No 1 mine which is being planned for recovery, containing some 80,000 tons of coal. The outcrop mines at No 9 and No 11 are exhausted and equipment is being removed.

At Acmar, No 5 is completely worked out and equipment is being removed. About 70,000 tons of adjacent outcrop coal was stripped and dumped at the No 5 tiple. Additional coal is "being uncovered" near old No 3 Acmar, and is expected to contain 75,000 tons. It is planned to uncover the old No 1 coal for stripping and is expected to contain some 300,000 tons of coal. No 6 and 7 Acmar are in retreat robbing but are expected to produce on this basis for two more years. No 8 is the largest operation at Acmar with a lot of unworked territory due to the requirement to maintain pillars and blocks for roof control. The plan is to develop all entries to their planned extent and to rob all of these areas on retreat. No 9 Acmar is being developed "slowly with temporary hoist and tiple... and should be some of the best work at the Acmar Division." It is noted that a small mine has been opened "about 1/2 mile west of White's Chapel" with about 7,000,000 tons of coal. The output here is planned to be moved by truck to the railroad initially extending rail later if things work out. [Is this Margaret No 10?]

Truck sales are noted as having decreased due only to a shortage of coal. It is expected this business can be expanded. Sales by commission of Galloway Coal Co's Elk River and Jagger coal continue producing royalty revenue of \$31,000.

Labor relations are noted as being "the same... [good] and information that I receive is that [the employees] have not joined any labor organization either the local crowd or the UMW."

Corporate records are limited for the years 1945-1949. In 1946, AF&ICo purchased the Galloway Coal Company in Walker Co for \$250,000. The year 1947 was the best year for the company, but in 1948 business was poor in general as well as for the company. One of the company's coal yards, located at 10th Avenue downtown was sold in 1948. Mining conditions had become more difficult and there was no quarterly dividend for 3rd quarter 1948. Various lands owned by the company were sold off to a C. E. Gove during 1948, amounting to some 2,000 acres at various locations in Tuscaloosa, Jefferson and DeKalb Counties in Ala-



bama. Henry T DeBardeleben died in 1948. In 1949 the Russellville brown ore lands, idle for a number of years were sold to Sloss for \$100,000. Railroad business was decreasing due to dieselization by most all southern railroads. Quarterly dividends were being paid on and off in this period, with no dividend for second quarter 1950, noting "drastic reductions in personnel and increased operating expenses." A significant land sale occurred in 1950 involving lands in Walker County purchased from the CoG RR years earlier and sold to Alabama Power Company for \$1.25 million. Also this year the villages at Acmar and Overton were sold to Marc Levine for \$175,000.

There is a **1950** Board report dated December 15, 1950. This meeting was very important as it begins the process of ending the operations of the AF&ICo. The stated reasons are summarized: the market for bituminous coal has been greatly reduced by competing sources of fuel; the operations of the company have been largely conducted on leased property, and present mines are solely on leased property; most of the coal that can be mined for profit has been mined; due to these conditions the mining of bituminous coal has become unprofitable and "hazardous to its stockholders without any foreseeable improvement in business conditions."

Thus the decision was made to cease business and liquidate the corporation starting immediately [December 15, 1950]. A plan for liquidation was presented to be approved by the Board and presented to the stockholders on March 6, 1951. There are 10 steps to the plan summarized: immediately cease all operations of mining and selling coal; surrender and cancel all leases and removed all equipment and sell same for cash; cancel all contracts; complete the sale of coal lands in Walker County [to Alabama Power Co]; sell all personal property such as leases, notes bonds and stocks; sell all remaining coal and ore lands and other real estate; pay all debts and distribute all available cash to stockholders in a series of liquidating dividends; complete liquidation shall be completed by December 1, 1953 or sooner, any property or assets remaining to be distributed to stockholders or trustees; all of this to be authorized by

stockholders by signed resolutions; dissolution shall be vested in the Board or a designated committee.

Final liquidation was declared July 17, 1953, by transferring all remaining assets to the Galloway Coal Company [purchased in 1946], and equalizing stock shares so that Galloway stockholders would own any remaining value of Alabama Fuel & Iron Company assets.

It is noted that there are a number of business activities of AF&ICo that were not addressed in detail in these articles -- the focus of these articles being on the Cahaba Basin operations of the Company. For example, the purchase and leasing of coal lands in Kentucky, the purchase of the Walker County land reference above and the brown ore operations in Russellville, Franklin County, Alabama. Likewise, the various labor and social issues discussed by others were not addressed here except in passing.. For example, like all coal companies, worker safety and death were major issues, addressed by other authors, but not addressed here in detail.

Alabama Fuel & Iron is felt to be a unique organization, led by a unique family and in particular, Charles F. DeBardeleben. The extent of the company's coal operations and their position as the largest commercial non-captive coal operation in Alabama as well as their non-union position in the marketplace are unique. It seems to the author, that this may be better understood with a view of their operations in a coal basin considered by many to be second rate territory, and on leased land at that. Whether one "likes" the DeBardeleben's or not, they surely provided strong vision and leadership to create and operate a unique organization across nearly half a century.

