

FIELDS, EARL

INTERVIEW

13485

345



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Theodore N. Hamilton
Investigator.
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Interview with Earl Fields.
Arabs, Oklahoma.

Because of the smoke-free heat that was produced by the product known as "coke", it was quite a bit in demand during the early days before the more general use of oil and gas.

In the vicinity of McAlester coal fields, several ovens, as they were called, were built for the purpose of producing "coke". These ovens were large affairs, being constructed something on the order of a double-dome with a door at the bottom on each side and a partition that run through the center. In length the ovens sometimes would extend a couple of hundred feet and consist of ten or twelve ovens on each side. A track ran the entire length on the top of the ovens and it was from these tracks that coal was hauled and placed in the ovens through a door in the top of the dome. After a certain length of time, during which the oil and impurities were burned from the coal, the bottom door was opened and the

FIELDS, FARL

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13485.

- 2 -

residue, (coke) was removed and loaded for shipment to northern and eastern markets. One of these "coke-ovens" was located at Arabs, another at Alderson and a third at Buck.