



The Ivie coal mine, sunk around 1909, was known in Northeast Missouri for its high quality coal. (Courtesy of KCOM Library and Pickler Memorial Library)

The Forgotten Factory

Joseph M. Ivie may not be the name of anyone you have ever heard of, but if you were a citizen of Kirksville around the year 1900 you would.

J. M. Ivie was a well-respected businessman in Adair County. He lived here all of his life. He owned and operated a coal mine and a brick factory and there was a hotel close to the factory that he owned.

The coal was said to be of the highest quality in the state. It was located three miles west of Kirksville. The mine was equipped with the best and newest equipment. His coal output had increased over the years substantially. This mine was first opened in the year 1906. The coal was used for stoves in Kirksville. The company hauled the coal in by wagons and there was a massive obstacle in their way, Graveyard Hill. His mine was forgotten years ago because there were so many mines close to this area.

The brick factory was the largest brick producer in the area in the late 1800s. At one time in 1899, he had over one million bricks in stock. This factory was also one of the most prominent factories in Kirksville. The bricks were used as building bricks; then in 1907, local businessmen incorporated with Mr. Ivie and his son in an effort to produce paving brick. One kiln of paving brick was burnt with excellent results. The materials used in the bricks were found close to the mine.

Mr. Ivie always had a smile on his face for everyone and everyone like him. He had suffered from stomach trouble for two or three years, this also affected his heart. Mr. Ivie committed suicide by inducing carbolic acid. He was only 59 years old when he died in February 1909. Everyone was shocked when they heard of his death. He left a wife and three children.

In June of 1909, the Ivies sold their brick plant and 20 acres of land to the Adair County Brick, Coal and Construction Company. They ran the coal and brick operation after 1909 until 1912.

By Douglas Ryle
