

The Buffalo Creek Disaster

- Buffalo Creek Hollow was a small valley that consisted of about seventeen coal communities which were adjacent to Buffalo Creek
- When operation of the mine commenced in 1945 the practice dumping of slurry, or coal mining waste into the hollow also began.
- Coal companies who operated upstream of the communities dammed Buffalo Creek to facilitate mining operations, which created an earth dam that held back 130 million gallons of water and coal waste.
- On average, a thousand tons of slurry had to be dumped every day.
- Although there were many complaints about the safety of the coal company and its regulation of the Buffalo Creek site, nothing was ever done to improve the dam's conditions.
- The Buffalo Creek project had three earth dams ranging in size consisting of shale, clay, low-quality coal, and various coal-mining waste products.
- In 1971 alone, approximately 5,000 safety citations were filed against the Coal company who operated the Buffalo Creek site.
- On February 26, 1972, at 8:05 a.m., all three dams failed and 132 million gallons of water and coal mining waste came crashing down upon the small towns throughout Buffalo Creek Hollow