



# Billion Dollar Coalfield

*Alex Schust*

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## **Billion Dollar Coalfield** Alex Schust

Not shipping between October 23 and October 26. Signed by the author on request. Billion Dollar Coalfield is the story of McDowell County West Virginia, its communities and its coal industry as it traces the sweet and bitter fruits of a coal mining economy from the first shipment of coal in 1888 to the demise of the last of the pioneering coal operations in 1988. The quest for coal built 106 of the 125 McDowell County communities shown on modern maps. Billion Dollar Coalfield uses court records, deeds, letters, diaries, oral recollection, technical journals and newspapers to tell the who, what, when, where, how and why those communities were built. Filled with 515 photographs, 100 maps and 47 company letterheads, the 640 pages of Billion Dollar Coalfield describes how the communities and the coal operations made McDowell County the leading coal producing county in West Virginia. Billion Dollar Coalfield follows the tracks of the Norfolk & Western Railway along the main line and the branch lines that followed the rivers and creeks and reached into the hollows to haul away the coal for steel making, export, home heating and multiple other uses. Billion Dollar Coalfield takes the reader from Maybeury to Isaban, from Crumpler to Bishop and through all of the coal communities in between. Its pages show how the coal industry grew the population to nearly 100,000 people in 1950 and dropped it to 35,000 by 1990. Billion Dollar Coalfield is a story of success and failure as it completes the history found in Gary Hollow and Coalwood. While each book is complete within itself, taken together, this Coalfield Trilogy, provides the reader an incomparable record of life and work in the Billion Dollar Coalfield of McDowell County. Billion Dollar Coalfield is a hard cover book in a 9 inch by 12 inch format with high



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