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Railroads and Coal: Resource Extraction in Indian Territory, 1866-1907

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railroaders. By 1878, Coleman Cole's tenure as Principal Chief expired and coal mining continued, although not at the rate Edmund McCurtain desired.

The Osage Coal Company mines supplied coal exclusively to the MKT railroad. The MKT used the Indian territory coal exclusively to power its locomotives. The entire line felt any disruption in fuel supplies for the railroad. The fuel agent for the railroad predicted future potential difficulties along the "Choctaw Line." Ira Hubbell wanted McAlister Station to have "chutes of sufficient capacity to coal eight engines at any one time. It should be also arranged so that at least 3,000 bushels of coal should be stored beneath the pockets (as at Sedalia) to provide against strikes."⁹¹ These 127 tons of coal in reserve were to allow the engines to proceed through the region and onto the next fueling stations, no matter the labor situation. Local fuel supplies carried potential importance for the town of McAlister.

Coal mines were but one component of the regulation imposed by Native Americans on their lands. In order to mine coal, Euro-Americans needed to get permits from the respective Native American nations. Railroad workers were exempt from the permit requirements.⁹² Permits were issued only with the endorsement of a known Native American and the payment of a bond for between one thousand and five thousand dollars. Hiring many men to work the mines remained financially difficult for the Osage Coal Company. It would take a significant investment to produce the required number of workers for the Osage Coal Company.

⁹¹ Ira C. Hubbell, "Report of the Fuel Agent," in *Reports and Statements for 1876* (New York: Evening Post Steam Presses, 1876), 81.

⁹² Rouse, Hagerman, and Hedge, *Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railway System: Charters and Muniments of Title*.