

## Coal Geology and Mining History in the Dawson Area, southeastern Raton coal field, New Mexico

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### Abstract

The Raton coal field, located in northeastern New Mexico, is the second largest coal area in the state. This field is part of the highly dissected Raton Mesa region that provides good exposures of the Cretaceous-



Tertiary coal-bearing sequences deposited during the final regression of the Western Interior seaway. Most of the coals currently being mined were deposited further inland in poorly drained floodplain swamps. Mining of the Cretaceous Vermejo Formation coals began in the late 1890's in or near several of the canyon mouths along the eastern edge of the Raton field. Dawson, in the southeastern part of the field, developed into a major coal-producing area in the early 1900's. During the life of the town, ten mines were developed by the Dawson Fuel Company and the Stag Canyon Fuel company, predecessors of the Phelps Dodge Corporation at Dawson in the Vermejo Formation Raton coal bed, locally called the Dawson coal bed. The coals from these mines are high volatile A bituminous rank and have very good coking properties, which made them marketable to the copper smelters and railroads. The Dawson mines produced 33 million salable tons from 1899-1950, almost half the total for Colfax county during this period.