

Coal Near Sims.—One of the first coal beds to be mined in North Dakota was that at Sims, where mining has been carried on for over a quarter of a century, or since 1884, when the Northern Pacific Railway opened a mine at this point. The town is located in the valley of Hailstorm Creek, which empties into Big Muddy Creek four miles to the south, and in the side of the valley the following section is found:

| | Feet | Inches | |
|----------------|------|--------|----|
| Shale | 40 | | |
| Coal | 2 | | |
| Clay | | 6 | |
| Coal | 2 | | |
| Shale | 40 | | |
| Sandstone | | 3 | 6 |
| Shale | 60 | | |
| Coal, impure | | 4 | |
| Shale | 10 | | |
| Coal | 7 | 8 | |
| Shale, exposed | | | 12 |

It is the lower coal bed which has been so extensively mined in the vicinity of Sims. It is nearly on a level with the railroad and has an elevation of about 1,970 feet above sea level. It is also not far above the base of the Fort Union, probably less than 50 feet.

The coal is mined by running a slope into the hill until the bed is reached, and then following this until the haul to the surface becomes too long, when a new slope is opened. Many old mine entries may be seen near the base of the bluffs on either side of the valley. There is only one mine in operation at Sims at the present time, the Feland Mine, located about one-half mile southeast of town and reached by a spur from the Northern Pacific road. The coal is hauled to the surface by mules and provision is made for loading directly onto the cars for shipment.

The 4-foot coal bed has been worked at some points but has never been extensively mined here.

Several lower coal seams are given in the log of the deep boring at Sims, quoted by N. H. Darton,¹ and furnished by the driller from memory. These are reported as follows :

| Thickness in feet | Depth below surface | |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----|
| Coal | 8 | 10 |
| Coal | 5 | 70 |
| Coal | 5 | 136 |
| Coal | 5 | 330 |
| Coal | 6 | 710 |

The upper one of these beds is perhaps the seam which has been so extensively mined, though this cannot be definitely determined. The lower coal beds, with the possible exception of the first of the four, if they are actually present, must be in the Lance beds, which as we have seen are not far below the surface at Sims. But, as has been previously stated, the Lance beds of south-central North Dakota are barren of coal throughout most of this region, and the accuracy of the above log may be questioned, particularly since it was given from memory. Thin coal beds associated with black, carbonaceous clay, may have been mistaken in the drilling for the thicker seams of coal reported by the driller. But while there is some doubt about these lower seams of workable thickness being present in the Lance beds, there is abundant evidence that a number of coal beds occur above what we may call the Sims coal bed, meaning by this the one so extensively mined at that place. These higher lignite seams are found in the vicinity of New Salem, Glen Ullin and Hebron.