

Thurber Timeline

1884

Colonel Robert D. Hunter's daughter, Jennifer Colorado, marries Edgar Lewis Marston, later president of the Texas and Pacific Coal Company, June

1886

Over 300,000 workers demonstrate in Chicago in behalf of an 8-hour work day

William and Harvey Johnson purchase Pedro Herrera survey property, future site of Thurber, October

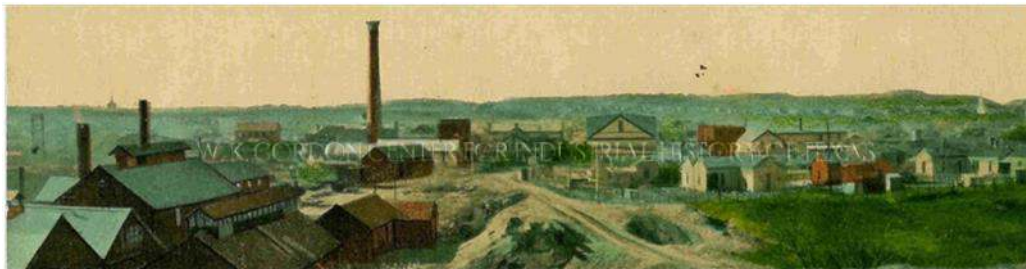
Johnson Brothers' mine shaft No. 1 becomes operational, December

Texas and Pacific Railway agrees to construct a spur rail line to the Johnson Brothers' mining operation, but do not sign contract for coal purchases until May 7, 1887

1887

Interstate Commerce Act requires railroads to charge reasonable rates and forbids them from offering rate reductions to favored customers, February 4

Johnson Brothers incorporate as the Johnson Coal Company; hold first board of directors meeting July 13



1888

Harvey Johnson dies, January 30

Johnson Coal Company announces that it is unable to meet its payroll, August

Members of the Knights of Labor organize local union at the Johnson mines.

Miners "strike" for unpaid wages in September, continuing labor action until fall 1889

Texas and Pacific Coal Company chartered by state of Texas, October 4, with organizational meeting on October 6

Texas and Pacific Coal Company purchases and takes possession of the Johnson Coal Company's mining operations, with disgruntled miners threatening Colonel Hunter, November 12

Texas and Pacific Coal Company begins construction of general store, drug store, and hardware store

Texas Ranger S.A. McMurry arrives at coal mines December 12, remaining to insure security of mines until July 8, 1889

1889

Texas and Pacific Coal Company brings first miners to work in its mines, February

Thomas Lawson opens a saloon at the company town, succeeding John L. Ward's contract with the Johnson brothers, May 20



William Knox Gordon arrives in Texas to survey route for railway line between Thurber and Dublin

1890

Colonel Hunter appeals to the Texas Rangers for protection due to threats, July 5

Texas Ranger Captain S.A. McMurry comes to Thurber for a second time, July 10

Infant Eva Chapman becomes first burial in Thurber cemetery

Shaft No. 3 becomes operational

1891

Construction of the Little Lake for water supply begins; completed the next year

1892

Ellis Island opens to screen immigrants entering the United States

Shafts Nos. 4 and 5 become operational

H.K. Thurber donates books to create a library

Texas and Pacific Coal Company builds Presbyterian and Catholic churches

1893

Shaft No. 6 becomes operational

Panic of 1893 begins the worst depression in American history up to that time

1894

Jacob Coxey leads a march on Washington, D.C., by the unemployed, May 1

Shaft No. 7 becomes operational, November

Company builds Hotel Knox and establishes Catholic Academy

1895

Texas and Pacific Coal Company purchases seven railway passenger cars to carry miners to work

Company builds small electric lighting plant

1896

In Plessy vs. Ferguson decision, the U.S. Supreme Court rules that racial segregation of blacks and whites is permitted by the constitution so long as both races receive equal facilities, May 18

Company builds Opera House and holds first grand ball there, October 19

Thurber Colts baseball team declared amateur champion team in Texas, autumn

Construction begins on the dam for the Big Lake with the company starting to pipe water to residences

Texas and Pacific Coal Company installs a 17-ton ice plant

1897

Thurber shale tested for possible brick production, February



Green & Hunter Brick Company incorporated to manufacture brick, March

Fire in Mine No. 5

Texas and Pacific Coal Company builds the Snake Saloon

1898

Spanish-American War, April 25 to August 12

Paving brick department added to brick plant

Smokestack constructed to serve brick plant

Shaft No. 9 becomes operational

1899

Edgar L. Marston succeeds Colonel Robert D. Hunter as president of the Texas and Pacific Coal Company

1900

Company abandons Shaft No. 6 leaving Nos. 7, 8, and 9 in production

Shaft No. 10 becomes operational

1901

Texas and Pacific Coal Company formally acquires Green and Hunter Brick Company, January 1

Oil is discovered in vast quantities at Spindletop near Beaumont, Texas, January 10

Company installs large direct-current dynamo

Texas and Pacific Coal Company erects Baptist and Methodist churches

1902

Fire destroys the Thurber general store and bakery, February 25

The United Mine Workers stage a strike against anthracite coal mine operators in the northeastern states; President Theodore Roosevelt appoints a commission to mediate the settlement, May 12

Texas Governor Joseph D. Sayers visits Thurber, May

Colonel Robert D. Hunter dies, November 8

1903

William Knox Gordon marries Fay Kearby, February 25

United Mine Workers attempt to organize at Thurber and go out on strike; Texas Ranger Captain John H. Rogers arrives to protect mining property, September 7

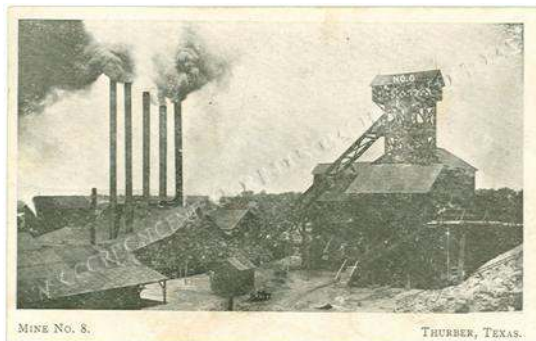
United Mine Workers begin strike against Texas and Pacific Coal Company, September 10

First labor union meeting held at Thurber Opera House, September 20

Edgar L. Marston signs labor agreement for the Texas and Pacific Coal Company, September 27

Shaft No. 11 becomes operational

1904



Fire in Mine No. 8 begins on June 3
and burns until June 19

Erath County voters choose prohibition of sale and consumption of alcohol, leading Snake Saloon to be rebuilt just across the county line in "wet" Palo Pinto County, June 11

William K. Gordon's daughter, Margie Kearby Gordon is born, October 10

1905

William K. Gordon's daughter, Margie Kearby Gordon, dies, June 15

International Workers of the World organized in Chicago, June 27

1906

Texas and Pacific Coal Company builds a new school on the Thurber quadrangle

Baseball park established and fenced the next year

1907

Fire destroys the Hotel Knox, April 25

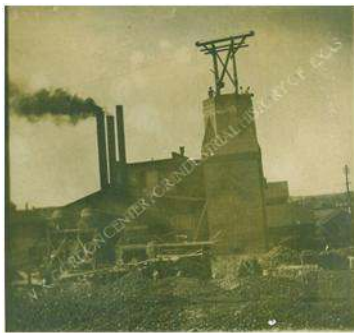
William K. Gordon's daughter, Louise Kearby Gordon, is born, November 1

Shaft No. 12 becomes operational

Shaft No. 7 closes, leaving Nos. 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 in production

1908

Shaft New No. 1 becomes operational



Company enlarges ice plant
and constructs power plant with
148-foot smokestack near town center

Henry Ford introduces the first Model T Ford automobile

1909

Texas and Pacific Coal Company begins erecting houses on Cemetery Hill, summer

Texas and Pacific Coal Company builds black church

1910

Mexican Revolution begins, leading to large-scale refugee migration into Texas, November

Shaft New No. 2 becomes operational

1911

Fire in Mine No. 9, June 27

Shaft New No. 3 becomes operational

1914

World War I begins in Europe, August

Government establishes Federal Trade Commission to prevent monopolies and unfair business practices, September 26

William W. Johnson dies in Mineral Wells, Texas, October 14

Shaft No. 8 is abandoned

1915

William K. Gordon begins exploratory oil well drilling, January 7

Company abandons Shaft New No. 2, leaving Nos. 10, 11, 12, New No. 1, and New No. 3 in production

1916

1914-16 union contract expires leaving workers idle for about one month, August

To prevent a nationwide railroad strike, the Adamson Eight-Hour Act mandates an 8-hour work day in the railway industry, September 13

1917

United States enters World War I, April 6

J.H. McCleskey No. 1 Oil Well blows in, opening West Texas to petroleum production, October 17

Gas replaces coal as fuel in the brick plant

Shaft New No. 4, the last in Thurber, is completed but never put into production

1918

Name of company changes to become Texas and Pacific Coal and Oil Company, April 17

Deadly influenza epidemic reaches its height across the nation killing 500,000 Americans, October

World War I ends in Europe, November 11

National prohibition closes the Snake Saloon

1919



Break in the Big Lake dam, January 24

William K. Gordon's daughter, Louise Gordon, drowns in Palo Pinto Creek, June 30

John Roby Penn replaces of Edgar L. Marston as president of the Texas and Pacific Coal and Oil Company

Company closes Shafts Nos. 11 and 12, leaving No. 10, New No. 1, and New No. 3 in production

Texas and Pacific Coal and Oil Company installs a modern water filtration plant

1920

J.H. McCleskey No. 1 oil well is plugged and abandoned, May 30

Women's Suffrage Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is ratified, August 18

Texas and Pacific Railway switches from coal to oil as fuel for its steam locomotives

1921

Congress institutes a quota plan that limits immigration to 3 percent of a nationality's number in the 1910 census, May 19

Shaft New No. 1 is closed

United Mine Workers strike unsuccessfully and the coal mines temporarily shut down; only Shaft No. 10 and New No. 3 remain in production, autumn

1922

Texas Pacific Oil and Coal Company incorporates a new subsidiary, the Thurber Pipe Line Company

First Christian Church is struck by lightning and burns

1923

William K. Gordon resigns from Texas Pacific Oil and Coal Company, remaining on its board of directors

Texas Pacific Oil and Coal Company offices move from New York to Thurber, Texas

Catholic Academy closes

1924

Congress reduces immigration to approximately 150,000 people a year, limiting each nationality to 2 percent of the number of persons in the U.S. in 1890, May

1926

Workers mine the last coal at Thurber

Shaft No. 10 closes

Most of the houses on No. 3 Hill and Stump Hill are sold and removed

1927

Company shuts down the last theoretically operable mine at Thurber, Shaft New No. 3

Edgar J. Marston replaces John Roby Penn as president of the Texas Pacific Coal and Oil Company

1929

Black Tuesday stock market crash, October 29

TP Aero gasoline station opens in Thurber

1930

Brick plant closes, January



Fire destroys the market, hardware store, and general offices, September 14

1931

Bank panic leads 305 banks to close in September, with 522 more closing in October

Brick plant reopens for two months, then closes permanently

1932

Edgar J. Marston resigns as president of Texas Pacific Coal and Oil Company

1933

Company stores clear all stock from shelves at Thurber, July 1

National prohibition is repealed, December 5

General offices close and staff moves to Fort Worth, Texas

Baptist Church burns

Four-year liquidation of the brick plant begins

1934

John Roby Penn reelected president of Texas Pacific Coal and Oil Company, April 18

Texas Pacific Coal and Oil Company elects William K. Gordon president of the board of directors, May 23

1935

Edgar L. Marston dies in Los Angeles, September 23

Remaining Thurber schools close and students go to Strawn, Texas, for classes

1936

Post office closes in Thurber, which begins receiving mail by rural delivery, November 30

1937

Company dynamites brick plant smokestack, erected in 1898, during liquidation of kilns, March 29

Thurber Old Settlers Association forms, July 4

St. Barbara's Catholic Church relocated to Mingus

Thurber abandoned

2009



Interstate 20 bisects the remains of downtown Thurber which include the general mercantile building, a modern gas station modeled after a mine tipple, and the towering smokestack constructed as part of the electric plant in 1908.