

# EXPLORE AREA ATTRACTIONS

## Hope and Zaleski Iron Furnaces

During the late 19th century, there were 69 iron furnaces in the Hanging Rock Iron Region of Ohio. Two of these furnaces, now known as the Hope Furnace and Zaleski Company Furnace, were located within the boundaries of present-day Zaleski State Forest and Lake Hope State Park. The stack from the Hope Furnace, located in Lake Hope State Park near State Route 278, still stands. An Ohio Historical Marker highlights the site which is a popular tourist attraction. The Zaleski Company Furnace was disassembled and removed by a buyer in 1875.

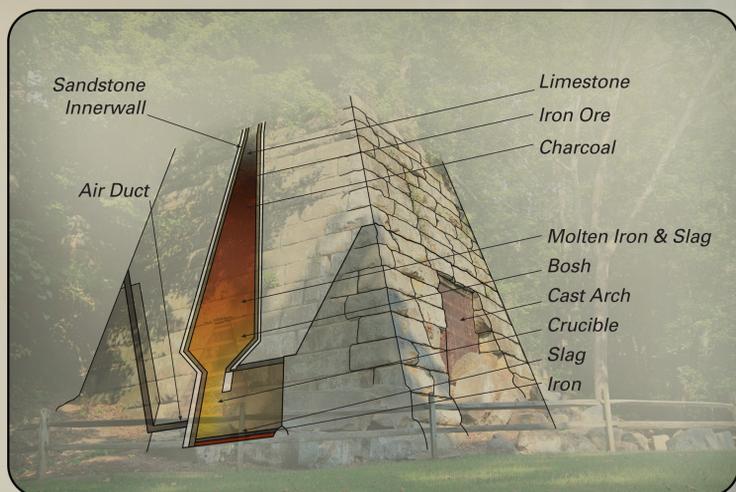
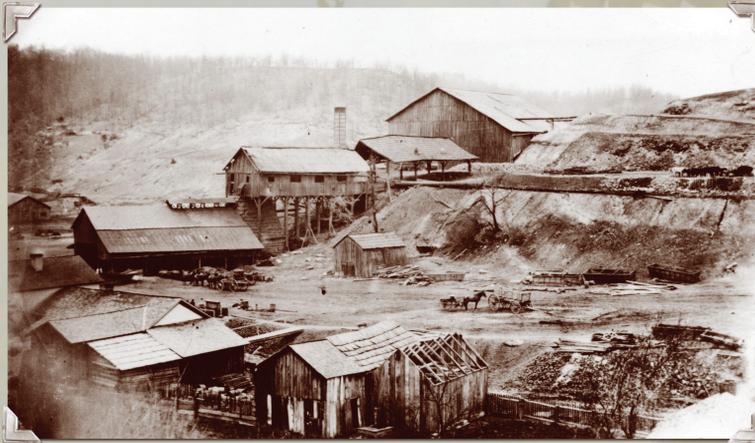
These iron furnaces were a type of blast furnace used to smelt iron ore into cast iron. The furnaces were built of stone in the shape of a truncated pyramid and were generally charcoal fired. The furnaces were constructed of local sandstone and lined with firebrick produced locally in kilns from clay mined in the area. The area possessed vast reserves of iron ore, coal, limestone and timber for charcoal, essential in the production of cast iron.

The Hope Furnace operated from 1854 to 1874 and supported a community of about 300 people. The furnace operated on a 24-hour schedule, and during its peak operation, produced 15 tons of cast iron per day. In 1973, the Hope Furnace was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Zaleski State Forest Headquarters is on the site where the Zaleski Company Furnace and associated structures stood. The Zaleski Furnace operated between 1858 and 1870. The main business of the Zaleski Company was coal mining, and the company was largely responsible for settling the area. Homes, stores, churches, hotels, boarding houses, restaurants, taverns, jails and other community-based structures were erected to accommodate a growing community of about 1,500 people.

Sometime in 1854 or 1855, construction of the railroad stalled around Jackson, Ohio, due to a lack of funds. A geologist named David Christy of Cincinnati approached a Chillicothe railroad businessman named S. W. Ely with a proposal to buy options for coal rich lands along the "line of the railroad," which he would resell to the railroad in exchange for company stock. The railroad board, in turn, could sell the coal land options to foreign investors for a profit that could be used to resume construction of the line. Noah L. Wilson was sent to Europe to find a buyer for the land options, and he was armed with a little book written by Ely and Christy to describe the area's coal resources.

After seven months without success, Wilson went to Paris in 1856 and met with Peter Zaleski, a Polish count living in exile who was also a banker and financial advisor to a number of Polish investors. Zaleski read the little book about the coal lands of Vinton County and made a decision for himself and some of his investors to buy the options on 75 percent of these lands. Wilson was expected to take the remaining 25 percent. Though he did not have the money, Wilson knew he could find someone interested since he had already negotiated for the purchase of 75 percent. It didn't take Wilson long to secure the remaining funds needed, and the investors decided to name the newly formed company the Zaleski Company. Construction of the railroad resumed with the influx of these new funds. The Zaleski Company mined coal and iron ore and was the original owner and operator of the Zaleski Furnace.



Hope Iron Furnace was a charcoal burning iron furnace in operation from 1854 to 1874. The remains of the furnace can be seen at Lake Hope State Park.

The diagram above shows basic elements of an iron furnace. Components are added to the top of the furnace and descend through the furnace to exit from the casting arch as iron and slag.



Ohio Department of Natural Resources  
**ZALESKI STATE FOREST**