



A Lesson for Texas

Posted by [Heading Out](#) on April 11, 2005 - 3:49am

(To begin, a quick and very grateful thanks to [Kevin Drum](#), [Majikthise](#), [Unfogged](#), [Ezra Klein](#), and the many others who have kindly commented on this blog recently, and an especial thanks to ProfG who is laboring hard to keep you all interested, while I meander the Cheviots.)

Wandering the Ducal apartments yesterday I learned why Great (x10) Grandma came from Shipley to end up on the Northumbrian moors at a coal mine. At the time of what should have been the 12th Earl of Northumberland there was a bit of a kerfuffle out of which emerged the first Duke of Northumberland. His wife brought him up from Yorkshire and, among other things, they organized the local mines.

Northumberland mines produced increasing amounts of coal, fueling the growing British Empire, for the next 300 years. They now don't. A recent effort to get a mine restarted under the North Sea was just shot down this past week, perhaps for the last time. And now, if they want coal in this town, then it will pay to carry coal to Newcastle.

The death of the British coal industry was pretty brutal, and it happened in a very few years. And the North still hasn't recovered. Witness that for two years I have tried to find a hotel with high-speed internet. Finally last night, in the lobby (not yet in the rooms) of the Marriott at the Metro Center, I could connect. And so, today, my Mum gets to video chat with her American grandson.

When an industry dies then the economy dies with it, Tarry no longer exists on the maps, Tulsa is a much quieter place these days, and one day, sooner than they think, it will be the turn of the American oil patch. Sentiment brings back the tourists, sometimes by the bus load, and the Duke's estate was busy yesterday, but it is the business establishment that builds a stronger and more robust economy – and today such growth needs the IT info-structure and here, sadly, to date, it has not been found necessary.

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