

The slate quarry



Although shale had been exploited intermittently since at least the 16th century, it was only in the mid-19th century that industrial slate extraction began in Warmifontaine. The slate quarry played a central role in local life. During the first explorations in 1845, a first vein was discovered and exploited in the Collet and Marenne pits.

In 1868, a more significant vein was developed in the Sainte-Barbe pit and was worked until 2003. By 1912, at the height of its activity, the Tock company employed around 300 workers, and production reached 12 million slates per year. Despite the difficult working conditions, the village lived in rhythm with its natural resource.

In March 1912, a collapse occurred in the very heart of the village, completely destroying five houses and halting slate extraction. The impact of this disaster was felt on national production. Warmifontaine gradually became depopulated, and operations were suspended for 11 years.

Extraction resumed several times afterward, but on a smaller scale. In recent years, a private operator has been recovering usable slate waste from the spoil heaps for use in construction.



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