Dud Dudley Encyclopedia Article

Dud Dudley

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Dud Dudley

1599-1684

English ironmaster who was the first to smelt (or fuse) iron ore with coal. Dudley was born the fourth of eleven children to Edward Lord Dudley in the county of Worcester. As a child, Dudley was fascinated with his father's iron-works, where the youngster learned the trade of iron manufacture. Iron smelting had previously been done with the use of charcoal. Dudley began experimenting with what he called pit-coal, and his experiments were heartily endorsed by the English government, which was concerned that the widespread use of charcoal, which is made from wood, was depleting the country's forests. Dudley received a patent for his invention in 1621 and began iron production at his father's ironworks.