

**BITUMINOUS HAULER:  
A SHORT HISTORY OF THE MONTOUR RAILROAD**

by Stan Sattinger  
Montour Railroad Historical Society

December 30, 2008

The Montour Railroad Company (designated here as "MTR" after the three-letter reporting marks by which the Montour's rail cars were universally identified) was organized on September 10, 1877 as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Imperial Coal Company. An initial five miles of rail line extended from a Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad ("P&LERR") connection at Montour Junction, located east of Coraopolis on the south bank of the Ohio River near the mouth of Montour Run, to the fledgling mining town of Guy's Mills. A second firm, the North Fayette Railroad Company, was incorporated on August 1, 1878, to build five additional miles from Guy's Mills to Valley Church.<sup>1</sup>

Line Extended by Merger

While the line was still under construction, these companies merged on September 10, 1878, taking the Montour name. At this time the Imperial Coal Company controlled the MTR, and the primary purpose of the MTR would be to furnish facilities for the marketing of 1,184 acres of bituminous coal that it owned. The line would also serve what was expected to become a rich farming district. The line was soon extended two more miles through Montour City (later renamed Imperial) and on to North Star. By late 1879 employment at the Imperial Coal Company, including its MTR and coke oven operations, totaled 400 persons.<sup>2</sup>\*

The first shipments of coal on the MTR averaged 800 to 1,000 tons daily and were delivered initially to barges on the Ohio River in July, 1879, but by October of that year, shipments were being directed instead to the P&LERR at Montour Junction. Much of the coal mined along the MTR was processed in 102 beehive coke ovens located a mile south of Montour Junction.<sup>3</sup> Passenger service on the MTR began in October, 1879, with 15 stations serviced along its 12-mile length. The MTR also began carrying U.S. Mail at that time.<sup>2</sup>

In 1899-1900 a large shop facility was constructed adjacent to the railroad at Montour Junction in Coraopolis, housing all the necessary equipment for a self-contained railroad shop. Included were car repair shops, engine house, blacksmith shop, storage tracks, and

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\* Reference 2 served as a source for much of the information presented here. The author, Gene P. Schaeffer, was employed as a Montour Railroad dispatcher beginning in 1978. Mr. Schaeffer assembled the Reference 2 publication, partly from record files and other materials he was able to preserve when operations ceased on the railroad.

a natural gas well. Locomotives would be scheduled for inspections and repairs in compliance with strict rules set forth by the Interstate Commerce Commission.

### Pittsburgh Coal Company Organized

In 1899 the Pittsburgh Coal Company (initially spelled "Pittsburg") was formed to purchase about 140 coal mining companies which owned 70,000 acres of bituminous coal located in Allegheny, Fayette, Washington, and Westmoreland Counties of southwestern Pennsylvania. The Imperial Coal Company was one of the companies included in this acquisition. The Pittsburgh district at this time was consuming about 14,000,000 tons of bituminous coal per year.<sup>4</sup> Bituminous was well-suited by its 60-80% carbon content to fulfill energy needs as diverse as heating buildings, fueling locomotives, and making steel.\*\*

Competition between companies had reduced the price of coal to below the cost of production in many cases. Price agreements among companies were unsuccessful, and it was finally determined that the only way to make the coal business profitable would be to combine them into one company. The new corporation was organized under the laws of New Jersey, but the titles to the coal properties and real estate were held in a corporation organized under the laws of Pennsylvania, all of the stock of which was owned by the Pittsburgh Coal Company. The amount of capital issued was \$32,000,000 in 7 percent cumulative preferred stock and \$32,000,000 in common stock. The new company began operations in a most fortunate time, when the demand for coal at once - or shortly after its organization - exceeded supply, and its success during the first year of its organization was most satisfactory. The Company was to remain unchanged until 1945, when a merger with the Consolidation Coal Company would occur.<sup>4</sup>

### Extension to the South and East

As soon as the best and most accessible coal deposits in the Imperial area had been depleted, the MTR's owners began to plan an extension to as-yet untapped reserves. A short distance to the south was an area of coal lands consisting of roughly 100,000 acres of the Pittsburgh Coal Seam. A new subsidiary, the North Star & Mifflin Railroad Company, was organized on October 28, 1912, to build a 34-mile extension of the MTR from Imperial in a gradual arc around Pittsburgh to the south and east. This extension would eventually connect with Carnegie Steel's Union Railroad at Mifflin Junction, located near the Pleasant Hills/West Mifflin municipal boundary, and thence with the Bessemer & Lake Erie Railroad ("B&LERR").<sup>1</sup>

Operations on this new extension began on February 1, 1915 after the North Star and Mifflin Railroad had been merged into the Montour Railroad Company. A six-mile MTR

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\*\* Carloads of coal became designated as "met" or "steam", depending on whether the end use was to be steel-making or power generation/heating. Coal to be used in steel-making was required to have relatively low phosphorus content.

branch was also built from a junction near Library easterly to the village of Snowden. Upon the construction of this 40 mile addition of new lines, the MTR reached new connections with other railroads. In addition to the P&LERR connection at Coraopolis and the B&LERR connection at Mifflin Junction, the line now interchanged with the Panhandle Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad ("PRR") near McDonald; with the Pittsburgh and West Virginia Railroad at Southview; with the PRR's Washington Branch at Hills Station; and with both the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and the PRR's Peters Creek Branch at Snowden.<sup>5</sup>

By 1916 the Pittsburgh Coal Company held complete control of the MTR. Other firms constructing mining operations that would be serviced by the new extension included the Henderson Coal Company and the National Mining Company. By 1921, main track switches were installed for mining operations at Southview, Cowden, Hills Station, McAdams, Hendersonville, and Bishop in Washington County, and Coverdale (later named Bethel Park) in Allegheny County.<sup>2</sup>

Four tunnels -- the Enlow, National, Peacock, and Greers tunnels -- were originally bored to reduce the required amount of excavation. At 623 feet, the curving National Tunnel was the longest in length. However, the Peacock Tunnel had to be "daylighted" after construction owing to the instability of the terrain. Many steel bridges were built to maintain grade separation from vehicular traffic. The most impressive of these, measuring 962 feet, was located near McDonald and crossed streams, highways, and railroads, including the Chartiers Branch of the Panhandle Division of the PRR.<sup>2</sup>

### Branches Added

Although the 45-mile main line of the Montour was completed in 1914, two additional branches were added in the next decade and a half. A short spur from Muse Junction to Muse was begun in October, 1921 to serve United States Steel's National 3 mine (initially designated National Mining Company #3). National #3 was closed in December, 1953. Another branch was begun at Gilmore Junction in 1922 with an initial 2,200 feet of railroad to reach the Gilmore Coal Company's Morris Mine. In 1927 a four-mile extension was added, bringing the MTR to the village of Westland to serve the Pittsburgh Coal Company's new Westland #1 Mine. Westland #1 was worked continuously until December 15, 1981, when it was closed. A second mine, Westland #2, was opened at that time with its entry located about a half-mile north of #1.<sup>2</sup>

Wartime, with its huge energy demands, had large impacts on the affairs of the MTR. During World War I, control was taken over by the Federal Government:<sup>2</sup>

"During 1916, with the involvement of the United States in the war in Europe, the Montour Railroad was called upon by the Federal Government to handle additional traffic. On December 26, 1917, United States President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed possession and control of the nation's railroads, naming Secretary of the Treasury, William G. McAdoo the Director General of the Nation's Railroads effective 12 noon, December 28, 1917.

"Sometime during April, 1918, the Montour Railroad made a request to the Federal Government to be released from Federal control citing the following reasons: a concern for the lack of continued development and the threat of being managed by other railroads such as the P&LE. Although this is speculation, the Montour Railroad was released from Government control on June 24, 1918."

During the 1920's, the MTR began work on relocating its original 1879 standard-gauge main track along Montour Run to reduce the many sharp curves that in some places reached 16 degrees of curvature. Beginning at Montour Junction and extending six miles east to Scott Station, the original main line was reconstructed with many relocations of Montour Run. Several new steel and concrete bridges were erected. A second phase from Cliff Mine Station to Imperial included the addition of the Enlow Tunnel (earlier designated as the Jeffreytown Tunnel) near Imperial. The main track in Imperial was also raised to enable it to cross above U.S. Highway 30, eliminating a high-accident-rate grade crossing.<sup>2</sup>

### Champion Preparation Plant

Built on the Allegheny/Washington County border in 1928 and designed to prepare nearly 13,000 tons of bituminous coal per day, the Champion Preparation Plant was to serve as a central location for the processing of coal produced at mines on the MTR. As described in Reference 2:

"Unprepared coal was referred to as Green Coal or Stop Off Coal. Trains of Green Coal would be delivered to Pittsburgh Coal Company tracks at Champion.....Inside the Champion Preparation Plant shakers, screens, picking tables, and crushers prepared coal for customer orders. A large system of conveyors was used to move coal to different areas of the plant for preparation."

The Champion Preparation Plant was the heart of coal operations on the MTR. The scale of the nation's energy consumption and the magnitude of operations at Champion are demonstrated by the following account in the McDonald Record Outlook by reporter Mary Vierling:<sup>6</sup>

"In June of 1945, Champion 1 broke records, producing 300,070 tons of coal for the month. Thirty thousand tons went for locomotive fuel, 60,000 tons went to industries making guns, ships, and critical civilian materials; 15,000 went for heating homes and buildings; and 195,000 tons went to the Great Lakes, to be shipped to the Midwest and Canada for domestic and industrial use."

Some of the power-generation customers who used coal from the Champion plant as their prime energy source included Niagara Mohawk, Eastman Kodak, Rochester Gas & Electric, and New York State Electric & Gas. The Champion plant survived until November, 1983.<sup>2</sup>

## Changes in Service and Rolling Stock

Passenger service had initially been provided on the MTR but ended in 1927. Over 500,000 passenger-miles were recorded in 1924, but less than one-fourth of that much passenger traffic was carried two years later. <sup>1</sup>For a few years the MTR shipped dairy products from various farms located along the line and transferred them to the P&LERR at Montour Junction. This business was handled by the passenger crews. During its lifetime the MTR carried limited amounts of other freight besides coal, including lumber, pharmaceuticals, furniture, chemicals and solvents, automobiles, and tires. <sup>2</sup>

The MTR eliminated the last of its overall roster of 41 steam locomotives in 1952, replacing them with a fleet of 15 diesel units, mostly General Motors Electro-Motive Division SW-9's, that served the railroad until its abandonment. <sup>2</sup>In mid-1962 the MTR had in service 1,323 freight cars; nearly all were hopper cars for coal. On any given day many of these cars were located on the lines of other railroads with which the MTR interchanged. <sup>1</sup>

## Slow Decline to the End

By the 1950s, most of the coal mines serviced by the railroad had been worked out, and the MTR underwent a slow decline. Consolidation Coal Company sold the MTR in December of 1946: <sup>8</sup>

"The Pittsburgh Consolidated Coal Company has removed itself from the railroad business by selling its three lines -- the Montour, the Youngstown & Southern, and a private line from Smith's Ferry, Pa., to Negley, O. -- to the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie for \$9 ¼ million."

This ownership remained unchanged until April of 1975, when the bankrupt Penn Central Railroad sold the MTR to the P&LE (giving the P&LERR 100% ownership) as it divested property in conjunction with the creation of Conrail. From the day the P&LERR gained control, traffic on the eastern end of the system began to decline, and the closing of Montour #10 Mine in Library in 1977 hastened that process. Abandonment occurred in phases or sections; the MTR east of Brightwood Road in Bethel Park was abandoned in 1979. <sup>2</sup>

The flooding of Montour #4 Mine at Hills Station in 1980 rendered the track east of Gilmore Junction of no use. The main line from Gilmore Junction west to Montour Junction at Coraopolis was rebuilt in 1980 and 1981. Although operations continued to Westland Mine, the MTR sold off most of its diesel fleet in 1981 and began to dispose of its freight car fleet as well. <sup>5</sup>

The Westland Mine, MTR's last remaining customer, closed in late 1983. In 1984 an application for abandonment of the remaining 26 miles of Montour Railroad was filed with the Interstate Commerce Commission. The last crew was called at the Montour

Junction headquarters on November 1, 1984 to deliver the last cars and locomotive to the P&LERR for final disposition. The MTR was down to just 23 miles of track between Montour Junction and Gilmore Junction when operations finally ceased in 1984 with the closing of the Westland Coal Mine. Removal of this remaining track took place during 1984.<sup>9</sup>

### Historic Preservation

In 1991 large portions of the abandoned MTR right of way were acquired by the non-profit Montour Trail Council to launch a 50-mile recreational trail project, which is nearing completion.<sup>5</sup> In 1992 the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission issued a letter declaring the State Historic Preservation Officer's opinion that the Montour Railroad in Allegheny and Washington Counties is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>10</sup> An application for the National Register listing has not as yet been submitted, but this application is likely to become a near-term project of the Montour Railroad Historical Society, a newly formed non-profit organization that is affiliated with the Montour Trail Council.

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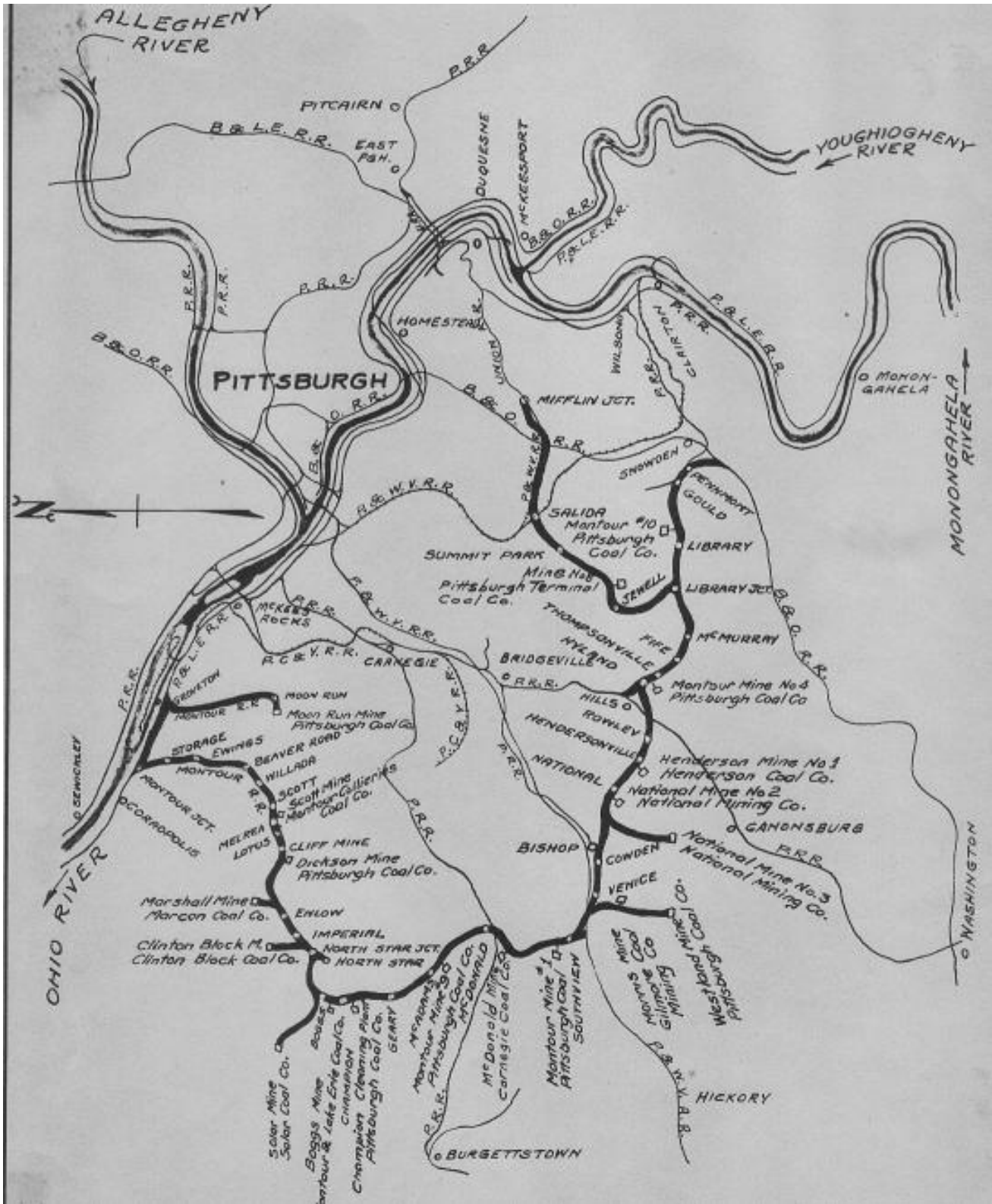


Fig. 1 - Map of the Montour Railroad as of January 1930<sup>2</sup>



# Montour Railroad

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia


**Montour Railroad** (AAR reporting marks **MTR**) is a former short line railroad company operating passenger and freight service on standard gauge track in southwestern Pennsylvania. At its height in the 1930s, the railroad served 27 mines transporting nearly seven million tons of coal annually in Allegheny and Washington Counties.

The Montour Railroad Company was chartered in 1877 as a wholly owed subsidiary of the Imperial Coal Company. The first segment constructed extended from the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad line at Montour Junction, near Coraopolis, Pennsylvania to the Imperial Coal Company mines at Imperial, Pennsylvania. In 1901, the Pittsburgh Coal Company assumed control of the railroad. A major expansion was undertaken in 1912 to reach new coal mines and factories. By 1917, the town of West Mifflin, Pennsylvania on the Monongahela River was reached. The Montour Railroad became an important feeder line and eventually all five major truck carriers in the southwestern Pennsylvania market were linked to the Montour Railroad. In 1946 the Pittsburgh Coal Company sold the Montour Railroad to the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad (a subsidiary of the New York Central Railroad), who operated it jointly. The P&LE acquired sole control of the Montour Railroad in 1975.

The railroad's engine houses and shops were located at Montour Junction, near the Ohio River at Coraopolis, Pennsylvania. The Montour Railroad had passenger service in its early years from 15 stations along its route, but passenger service was abandoned by the mid 1920s. By the 1950s, most of the coal mines the Montour serviced had been worked out and the Montour began a slow decline. The Montour Railroad was down to just 23 miles of track between Montour Junction and Gilmore Junction when operations ceased in 1984 with the closing of the Westland Coal mine, the Montour's last remaining major customer. In the 1990s large portions of the rights of way were acquired by the Montour Trail Council in a "rails to trails" program.

Retrieved from "[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montour\\_Railroad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montour_Railroad)"

Categories: Defunct Pennsylvania railroads | Former Class I railroads in the United States | Companies established in 1877 | 1984 disestablishments | Allegheny County, Pennsylvania

| Montour Railroad  |   |
|---|---|
|  |   |
| <b>Reporting marks</b>  | MTR   |
| <b>Locale</b>   | Coraopolis, Pennsylvania to Imperial, Pennsylvania and West Mifflin, Pennsylvania |
| <b>Dates of operation</b>   | 1877–1984   |
| <b>Track gauge</b>  | 4 ft 8½ in (1,435 mm) (standard gauge)  |
| <b>Headquarters</b>   | Coraopolis, Pennsylvania  |

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Fig. 2 - Montour Railroad History, Wikipedia Entry<sup>9</sup>

| <b>MAIN LINE<br/>MONTOUR JCT. TO SALIDA</b>            |                               |                                 |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| STATIONS*  | Distance from<br>Montour Jct. | Siding Capacity<br>50 foot cars |
| MONTOUR JCT. ....                                      | 0.00                          | ....                            |
| EWINGS . . . . .                                       | 1.98                          | ....                            |
| SCOTT . . . . .  | 5.33                          | ....                            |
| LOTUS . . . . .  | 6.47                          | 35                              |
| CLIFF MINE . . . . .                                   | 8.11                          | 30                              |
| IMPERIAL . . . . .                                     | 9.42                          | ....                            |
| NORTH STAR . . . . .                                   | 10.69                         | ....                            |
| BOGGS . . . . .  | 12.65                         | 50                              |
| CHAMPION . . . . .                                     | 12.98                         | 55                              |
| RUSSELL . . . . .                                      | 14.47                         | ....                            |
| McADAMS . . . . .                                      | 16.77                         | 38                              |
| McDONALD . . . . .                                     | 17.86                         | 88                              |
| PEACOCK . . . . .                                      | 20.91                         | 66                              |
| SOUTHVIEW . . . . .                                    | 21.83                         | ....                            |
| GILMORE JCT. . . . .                                   | 22.55                         | ....                            |
| COWDEN . . . . .                                       | 24.28                         | 70                              |
| MUSE JCT. . . . .                                      | 25.30                         | ....                            |
| HENDERSON . . . . .                                    | 27.79                         | ....                            |
| HILLS . . . . .  | 31.04                         | ....                            |
| THOMPSONVILLE . . . . .                                | 31.95                         | 68                              |
| McMURRAY . . . . .                                     | 33.26                         | ....                            |
| LIBRARY JCT. . . . .                                   | 35.08                         | 40                              |
| JEWELL . . . . .                                       | 37.05                         | 20                              |
| BROOKSIDE . . . . .                                    | 38.32                         | ....                            |
| COVERDALE . . . . .                                    | 39.12                         | ....                            |
| BRIGHTWOOD . . . . .                                   | 39.79                         | ....                            |
| SALIDA . . . . .                                       | 41.37                         | 16                              |
| The direction from Montour Jct. to Salida is eastward. |                               |                                 |
| *See Page 11 for list of station numbers.              |                               |                                 |

Fig. 3 - List of Stations from Timetable<sup>12</sup>

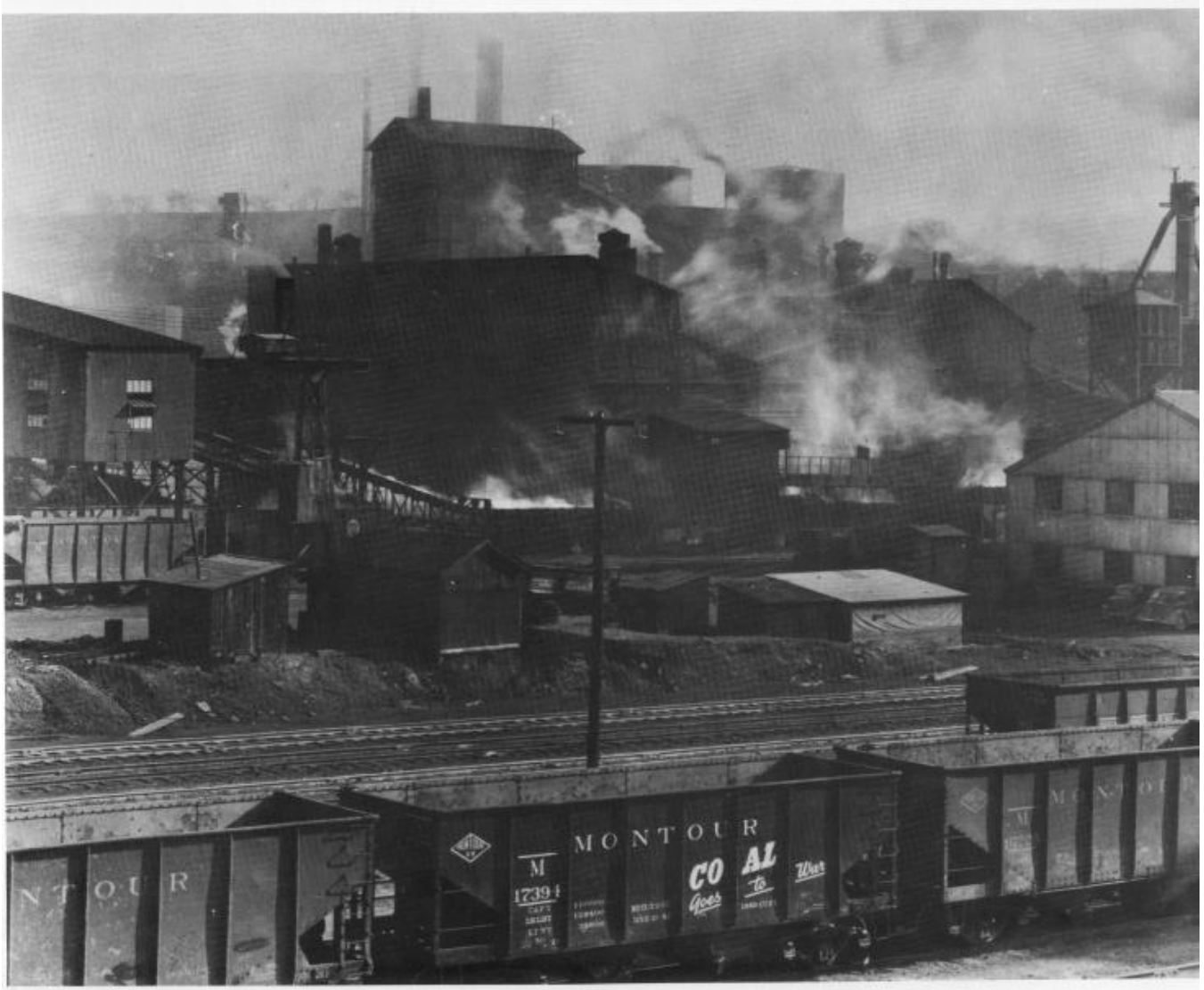


Fig. 4 - "Coal Goes to War:" WWII Operations at Champion Preparation Plant <sup>2</sup>

MONTOUR RAILROAD COMPANY

ANNUAL AVERAGES

| Years     | Average Miles Operated | Ton-Miles of Revenue Freight (thousands) | Passenger-Miles (thousands) | Operating Revenue (thousands) | Net Income (thousands) |
|-----------|------------------------|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1921-1925 | 57                     | 65,187                                   | 350                         | \$1,492                       | \$360                  |
| 1926-1930 | 57                     | 98,460                                   | 104*                        | 1,835                         | 570                    |
| 1931-1935 | 58                     | 98,726                                   | -                           | 1,830                         | 770                    |
| 1936-1940 | 55                     | 130,980                                  | -                           | 2,131                         | 799                    |
| 1941-1945 | 51                     | 147,889                                  | -                           | 2,755                         | 723                    |
| 1946-1950 | 51                     | 115,639                                  | -                           | 2,813                         | 634                    |
| 1951-1955 | 51                     | 94,409                                   | -                           | 2,234                         | 479                    |
| 1956-1960 | 51                     | 74,889                                   | -                           | 1,595                         | 255                    |
| 1960      | 51                     | 65,722                                   | -                           | 1,440                         | 394                    |
| 1961      | 51                     |  | -                           | 1,484                         | 120                    |

\*Two-year average, passenger service discontinued in 1927.

Equipment in Service  
December 31, 1961

Locomotives

14

Freight Cars

1218

~~1335~~

Work Cars

9

*(includes 2 loaned to Youngstown & Southern Railway Company)*

Dividends Paid

|           |         |
|-----------|---------|
| 1921-1925 | \$ 6.00 |
| 1926-1930 | 12.50   |
| 1931-1935 | 44.00   |
| 1936-1940 | 39.25   |
| 1941-1945 | 23.00   |
| 1946-1950 | 26.48½  |
| 1951-1955 | 18.00   |
| 1956-1960 | 19.50   |
| 1961      | 2.00    |

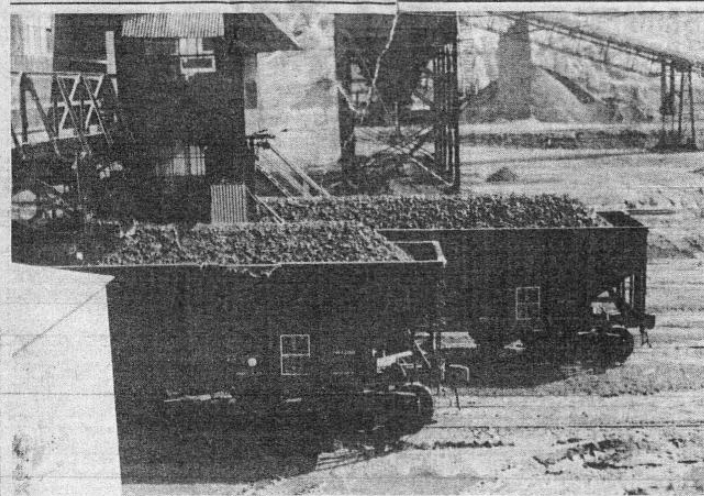
Fig. 5 - Tabulation of Ton-Miles Carried by Year<sup>1</sup>



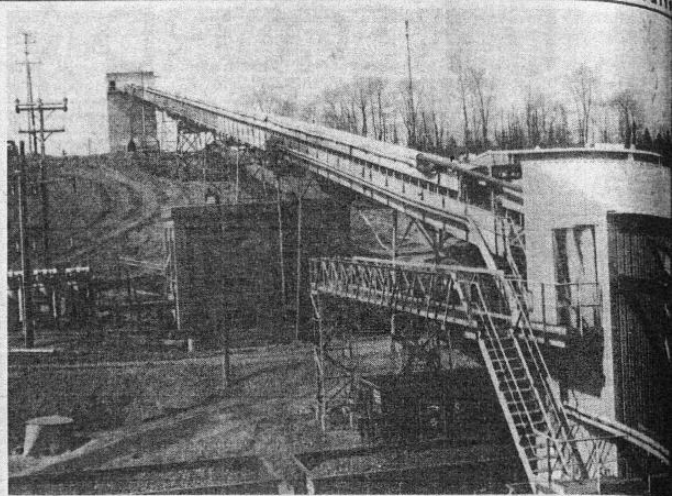


Fig. 6 - Montour Railroad Coal Train Emerges from National Tunnel. <sup>13</sup>

Caption by photographer Gene Schaeffer: "Forty-eight hundred horses housed in the V-12's under the hoods of SW9's 74/76/79/80 shout out of the west portal of National Tunnel with 44 loads of coal after climbing the 1.5 percent ruling grade out of Montour No. 4 mine at Cecil, Pa., April 11, 1980, on the Montour Railroad. Hard hit by recession, the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie subsidiary is now semi-dormant, its SW's scattered to the winds, and its as-needed service provided by the parent's SW1500's."



The "long 42" belt carried slate from the plant to the slate bin.



Clean coal, loaded and ready for shipping, rolls out of Champion I Preparation Plant.

## Only A Facade Remains Of Champion I Preparation Plant - The Coal Washer

By Mary R. Vierling

*Editor's Note: This is the first of a two-part series on the former Champion coal washer. Information came from the memories and personal records of former employees.*

The rumble, clang and black dust are gone.

The "long 42" is gone - the slate bin and processing plant to follow. Champion I Preparation Plant - the coal washer - will soon be just a memory.

Pittsburgh Coal Co. began building the plant in 1927. Located on Route 980 in Imperial, R.D. 1, it began operation in 1929.

For more than 50 years, the plant supplied the life-blood income for families in the area. Sales went for domestic and industrial use. In the 1930s and 1940s, Champion I Preparation Plant led the nation in coal production.

In the beginning - 1929 - the newly-opened coal washer's operation was overseen by plant superintendent Tom Wardell and plant foreman Roy Laughbeck, who had been transferred from New Mexico.

At that time, steam engines brought coal to the plant on the Montour Railroad, which had formed in 1915 after a falling out with the Pennsylvania Railroad.

The coal cars had a 50-ton capacity. At first coal arrived from Cliff Mine, located near the present Old Route 22/30. The mine soon ran out.

Over the years, other mines supplied coal. They included Wesleyan in Westland, Montour No. 4 and No. 10 in Lawrence, Southview No. 1 and No. 2 in Cecil, No. 9 in McDonald, the Hutchison and the

Margerum open pit. All coal was dug from the Pittsburgh vein, which ran from Pittsburgh to West Virginia.

### A LONG DAY'S WORK

Trains brought coal to the plant, which was unloaded into the rotary dump. (In the 1930s, excess coal was frequently dumped on the tracks in the event the plant had a breakdown).

A 4-foot wide belt brought the coal from the rotary dump into the plant, where it dropped into a bin and, from there, onto the picking table. Workers stood at the table, to hand pick the slate from the coal, dropping the slate to the gob table one floor below.

Additional picking was done at the gob table. There coal accidentally dropped from the picking table was recovered.

"During the steam engine days, they were very particular," one former employee said. "There were inspectors all over the place."

Block coal was set aside to be crushed. Later, the "intermediate," a crushing device, replaced the pickers.

"The picking table was the roughest job," Bob Ebel, who began work at Champion I in 1931, said.

Coal left the picking table and went into the "sink and float" plant, where it was washed by pressurized water. The heavy slate fell, while the water pressure forced the lighter weighted coal over, out and down a chute to be graded.

Occasionally a "binder" got through. This piece of coal, with slate still attached, was quickly recovered.

Grades of coal included fine, which went to the heat dryer; junior stoker, some of which was sold to

Woodville State Hospital for heating; stoker; stove and furnace. An additional grade, lump, measured 4 by 6 inches. It sold for \$6 per ton in 1946.

After washing and grading, the coal was lightly sprayed with oil "to keep the dust down." It progressed to the tippie where it was loaded into trucks or the waiting railroad coal cars. Coal that had been overloaded and spilled to the ground was recovered and sent through the washer once more.

In addition to one heavier weight "main" line, there were eight lighter weighted railroad tracks at the coal washer. In the 1930s there were also tracks which ran to the "bogs" where the slate was dumped. The bogs were located to the north of the coal washer, beyond the present Route 22/30 overpass.

Eventually a four-story, 30-by-30 steel slate bin was built across the plant. A belt, "the long 42," extended up from the plant, crossing Route 980. Slate and refuse were carried up by the belt and dropped into the slate bin.

"Yuke's," a heavy, off-road, 25-ton capacity dump truck, so named because many were manufactured by the Euclid Co., drove under the slate bin to be filled. **BUSINESS BOOMS; PRODUCTION RECORDS BROKEN**

Before 1930, a large valley extended from the slate bin to the Cummins (Geary) farm. Mine houses, as well as a farm, were situated between the two.

The farm, owned by Salvatore Lucci, head of the Champion I night repair crew, was bought by Pittsburgh Coal Co. One company house was moved. The rest were demolished.

The farmland and valley were filled with slate, or

boney as it was called by many, dumped there by the yukes. A slate dump on Reissing Road was filled with slate from the Bower Hill and Jumbo mines. Neither mine sent coal to Champion I.

Initially, Champion I employed 35 men. In his years time, the plant went to double shift with 35 men on each shift, plus a night repair crew of 20. Some received as much as 27 cents an hour.

"And I saved," one former employee said of his weekly paycheck. "One man had a house, wife, daughters and a garden in the backyard. I don't know how he did it."

By 1935, President Franklin Roosevelt was in office, the "New Deal" and Social Security had begun. It was also the year of the first contact with John L. Lewis and the United Mine Workers. The UMW came in and benefits improved. A dollar a pay went to Social Security. In 1941, the tippie operator was receiving \$1.01 an hour.

In June 1945, Champion I broke records, producing 300,070 tons of coal for the month. Thirty thousand tons of coal went for locomotive fuel, 60,000 tons went to industries making guns, ships, tanks and other civilian materials; 15,000 went for heating homes and buildings; and 195,000 tons went to the Great Lakes to be shipped to the midwest and Canada for domestic and industrial use.

Also in June 1945, Baldwin Locomotive Works completed manufacturing its first 2,000 horsepower diesel-electric passenger locomotive. A pamphlet, distributed to coal workers, urged them to increase production "so as to make the price of coal low enough to make the use of oil seem extravagant."

*The history of the coal washer continues next page.*

Fig. 7 - Reprint of McDonald Record Outlook Article by Mary Vierling <sup>6</sup>





COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
 PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION  
 BUREAU FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 BOX 1026  
 HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17108-1026

February 10, 1992

Marshall Fausold  
 Montour Trail Council  
 P O Box 11866  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15228-0866

To Expedite Review  
 Use Dhp Reference Number

Re: ER 90-0512-042-H  
 Public Utilities  
 Commission Docket #I-  
 870060, Montour  
 Railroad, Allegheny  
 and Washington  
 Counties

Dear Mr. Fausold:

The above named project has been reviewed by the Bureau for Historic Preservation (the State Historic Preservation Office) in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended in 1980, and the regulations (36 CFR Part 800) of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. These requirements include consideration of the project's potential effect upon both historic and archaeological resources.

It is the opinion of the State Historic Preservation Officer that the following resource is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places: Montour Railroad, Allegheny and Washington Counties.

The Bureau for Historic Preservation supports the Rails-to-Trails proposal for this former railroad line. Trail usage of the bridges, tunnels and rail right-of-way would not constitute an adverse effect on the National Register eligible resources.

If you need further information in this matter please consult Susan M. Zacher at (717) 783-8946 or 783-8947.

Sincerely,

Brenda Barrett  
 Director

cc: Public Utility Commission  
 Interstate Commerce Commission  
 BB/smz

Fig. 8 - Letter Regarding Eligibility of the Montour Railroad for Listing in the National Register of Historic Places<sup>10</sup>