

# Montour Memories – The Brush Run Road Bridge

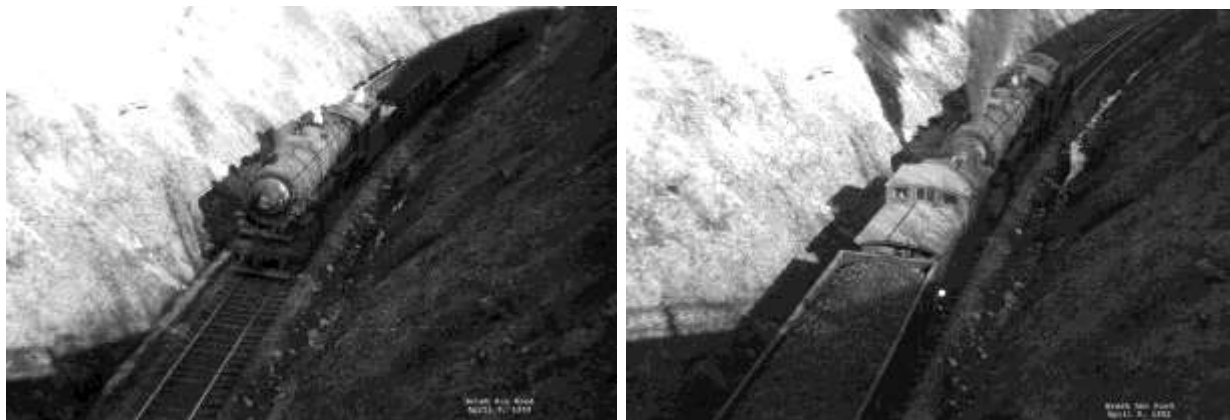
**By Tim Sposato - Montour Railroad Historical Society & former  
Montour Railroad employee**

*Where the Bethel Section of the Trail crosses Brush Run Road in Peters Township, it goes up an earthen ramp, crosses the road and continues down another ramp on the other side. While the Montour Railroad was in operation, this was an open cut in the hillside, with a steel and timber bridge carrying the roadway over the tracks. After the railroad ceased operations the bridge was removed and the cut was filled with dirt to carry the roadway. Former Montour employee Tim Sposato recalls several stories about this old bridge.*

This overhead bridge was located just around the curve east of Library Junction. I first discovered this aging structure when I was in 7th grade, while exploring the railroad right-of-way with a classmate.

The old bridge was rickety, the deck boards always loose. Bicycles would bounce wildly across them and the structure shivered and clattered as cars or trucks crossed. Lots of rust with little paint left, as she weathered out those final years.

This bridge used to have a bull rope tied under it, where the young and daring could swing from side to side, clearing the rails by about 5 feet. It was scary. The roadbed under the bridge was constantly littered with, you name it, washing machines, chairs, a couch, shattered TV's, broken beer and wine bottles, tin cans, rugs, old toys.....shall I continue?



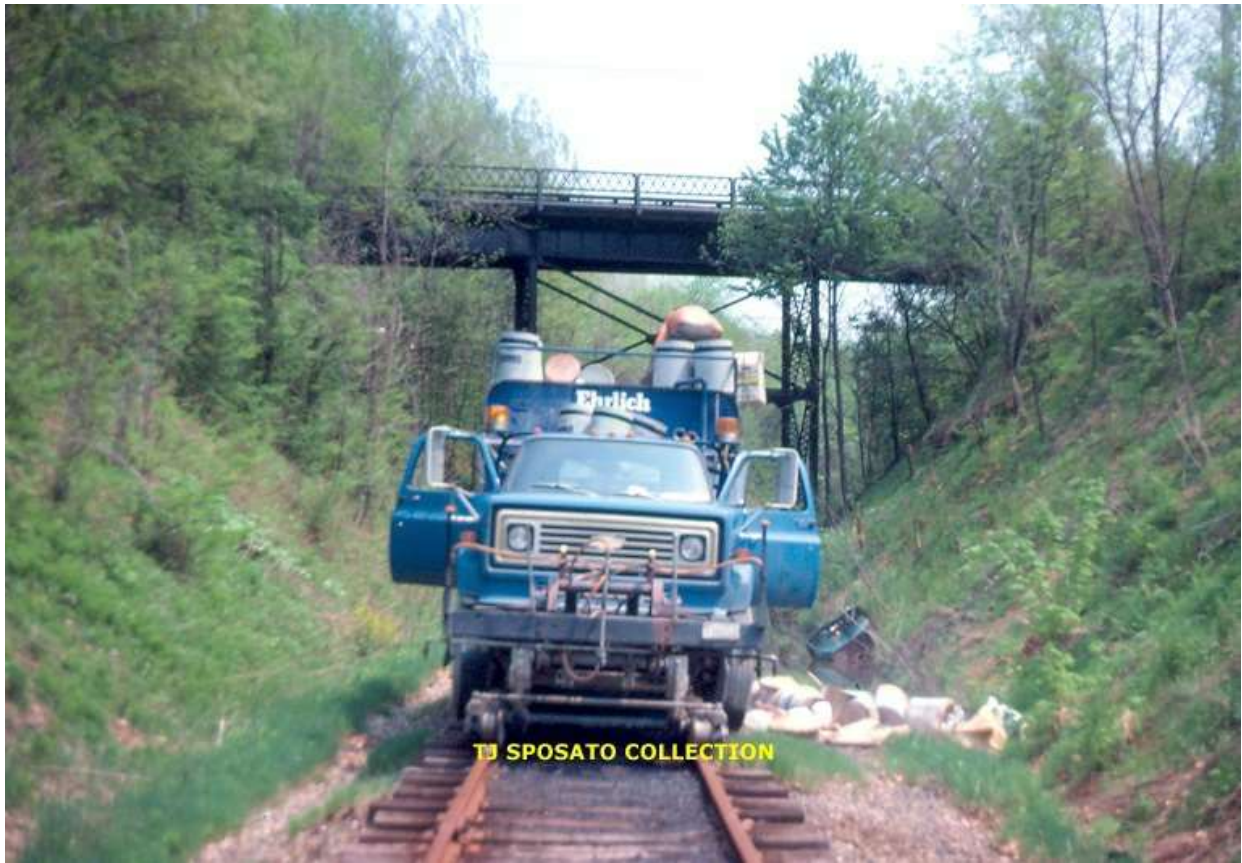
**Montour #27 approaches the Brush Run Road bridge with a train of coal in tow as #25 is pushing on the rear, April 9, 1952. The shadow of the bridge and railing can be seen in the lower left of the pictures. Photos courtesy William Poellot, Jr.**

A Monastery was located on Rocky Ridge above the bridge. This was a great source of curiosity for us youngsters as we would sneak around the place looking for the Holy Ghost Fathers. Once we got caught and the kindly Father took us in for a visit and some cold lemonade.

The first curve east of the bridge heading toward Bethel Park had a few homes next to the tracks. An elderly lady would occasionally appear on daylight runs with a homemade pie in her hands to hand up to the crew in the caboose as it rattled past. The crews would watch for her and the engine crew would radio back to the caboose if they saw her coming. I rode a few trips when this occurred, apple or cherry pies as I recall. The cherry was the best.

I hired onto the Montour after graduating high school and one hot summer day, we were hi-railing west in the track gang truck and stopped briefly near the bridge. I crossed around the back of the truck and spotted a rather large black snake coiled on the rocks. With a quick grab, I caught him and circled back around the truck. Foreman John Schmidt grinned broadly as I motioned that I would scare fellow gang members Bob Beck and Mark Broskey, who were waiting in the rear seat. As I opened the door, snake first, Mark screamed and frantically climbed over Bob's lap and fell head first out the truck window. Bob couldn't open the door because of Mark's body passing by, so he threw his hands up and hollered very loudly. I got worried after Mark disappeared and retreated with the snake. Those two guys were extremely sore at me, as Pete Williams and John roared with laughter.

Finally, the attached image was the last time a weed sprayer killed vegetation between Library Junction and Coverdale. I worked as the railroad's pilot on the truck as I had done a few times before. We stopped at the bridge to dispose of (burn) the chemical bags and felt this was the time to memorialize the scene. A year later these tracks were out of service and then abandoned.



**A high-rail weed sprayer truck pauses just east of the bridge in 1980. Tim Sposato photo.**

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