Westland No. 1 Mine (Bob Ciminel ©2012)

Westland Mine No. 1 was owned by the Pittsburgh Coal Company and located at the eastern (timetable) end of the Montour Railroad's Midland Spur/Westland Branch, just east of Route 519 at the aptly named community of Westland. It was adjacent to the Midland No. 2 Mine on the east and the Arden Mine on the south. The exact date when Westland No. 1 opened is not known, but it was concurrent with the completion of the Montour Westland Branch in 1928. An article in *Coal Age* magazine in 1916 reported that the Pittsburgh Coal Company was opening two mines at Westland that had been closed for two years. In all likelihood, these were the Midland No. 1 and 2 mines since the Montour Westland Branch had not been built yet.

Pittsburgh Coal operated the three mines at Midland, which were served by the Panhandle Palanka Branch (Midland 1 & 2) and the Westland Branch (Midland 3) from the early 1900s. With the completion of the Montour's Mifflin Extension in 1914, the Pittsburgh Coal Company wanted to ship its coal on its wholly-owned railroad subsidiary and avoid the costs incurred by shipping on the PRR. The completion of the Champion preparation plant in 1928 also provided an impetus to ship via the Montour.

In its initial phases, Westland mined coal toward the south where it could tap the reserves remaining north of the Midland Nos. 1 and 2 mines. A new entry was eventually opened to the north where mining could continue in the direction of Hickory and Gilmore until reaching the boundaries of the Montour No. 1 and Morris mines. This is where the major mining activity occurred through World War II. To the west of Westland, Pittsburgh Coal was mining in the Midland No. 3 Mine and shipping via the PRR Westland Branch. The ability of this very important mining district able to ship coal using two separate railroads certainly enhanced protection against sabotage. Coal could move via the PRR Westland and Palanka Branches to Carnegie or Washington and on the Montour Westland Branch to Montour Junction or to the PRR, Pittsburgh & West Virginia, Union, or B&O through its interchanges with those railroads.

Following the war, Westland opened a third entry on the west side of Route 519 to mine toward the west and northwest. This required building a trestle for the mine railroad over the highway to bring the coal to the Westland tipple for processing and shipping on the Montour.

During the war, the miners' village at Westland was a bustling place and probably deserves its own story to properly discuss its rich history.

Geologically speaking, the Westland No. 1 Mine was located on the west side of a structure called the Westland Dome, with the Pittsburgh coal seam sloping upward to the northeast and

downward toward the southwest. The Midland No. 2 Mine was located directly on the dome to the east of Westland. The Arden Mine was southwest of Westland and the two mines are interconnected at the northwest corner of the Arden Mine. Both mines are flooded, with the water level held at 938 feet above sea level by pumping. The pump for the Westland mine is located at the northern entries which penetrated the hillside at about 1,040 feet above sea level. This entry was used for taking miner and supplies in and out of the mine; coal was unloaded into a conveyor belt about 140 feet below grade and brought the surface. The western entry penetrated the hillside at 1,038 feet above sea level and worked down-dip to reach the coal.

The following table shows the production figures for Westland No. 1 before it closed and production shifted to Westland No. 2, which was about one mile north of Westland. Coal from Westland No. 2 was brought down to the Westland No. 1 tipple for shipping.

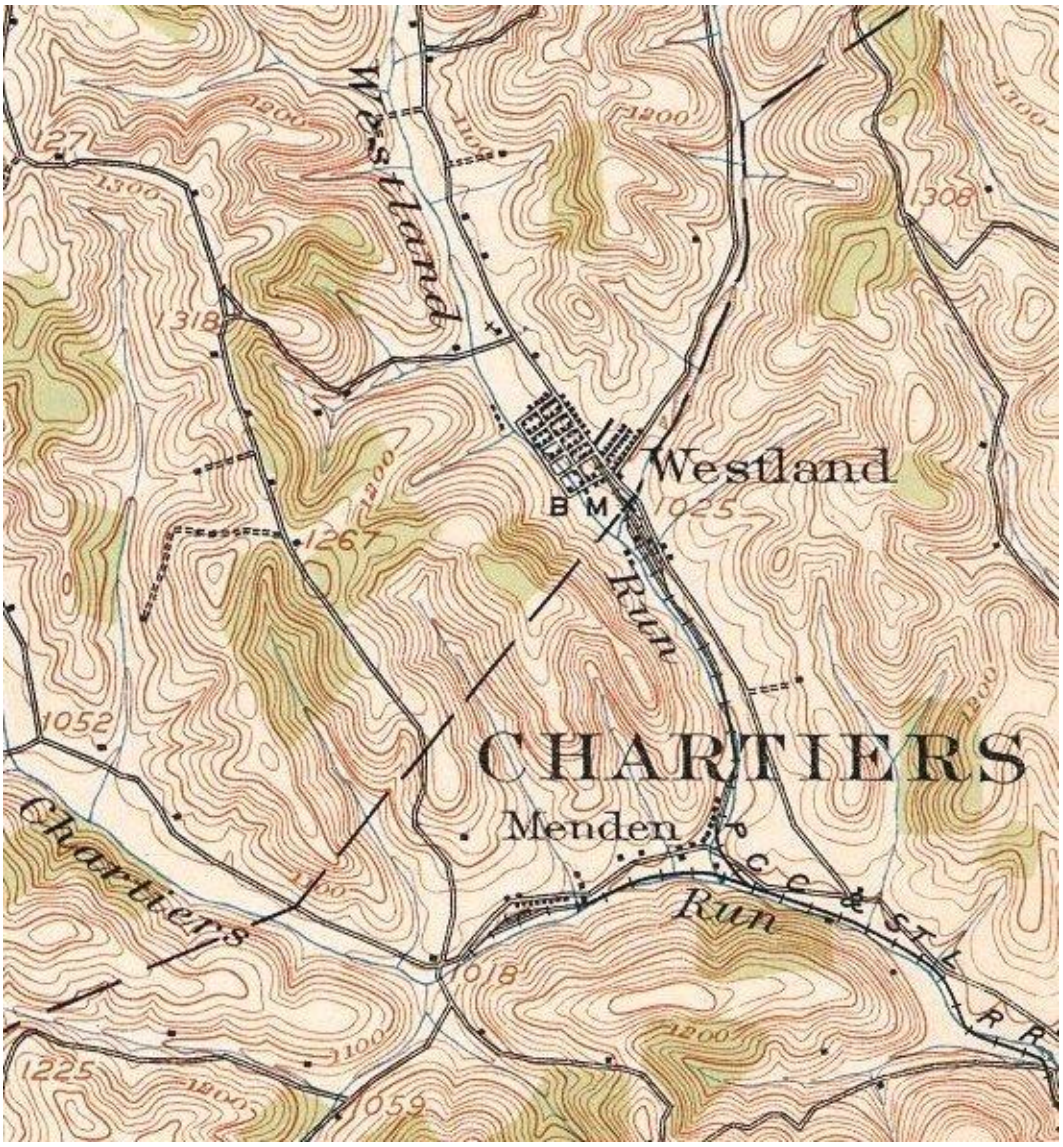
Year	Production (tons)	Days Worked	Employees
1931	1,080,877	230	896
1932	68,336	58	203
1934	648,928	221	755
1936	1,225,265	241	1,247
1944	1,014,894	289	488
1978	68,768		
1979	741,407		
1980	572,613		
1983	26,484*		

*This coal would have come from Westland No. 2, as Westland No. 1 was already closed by this time.

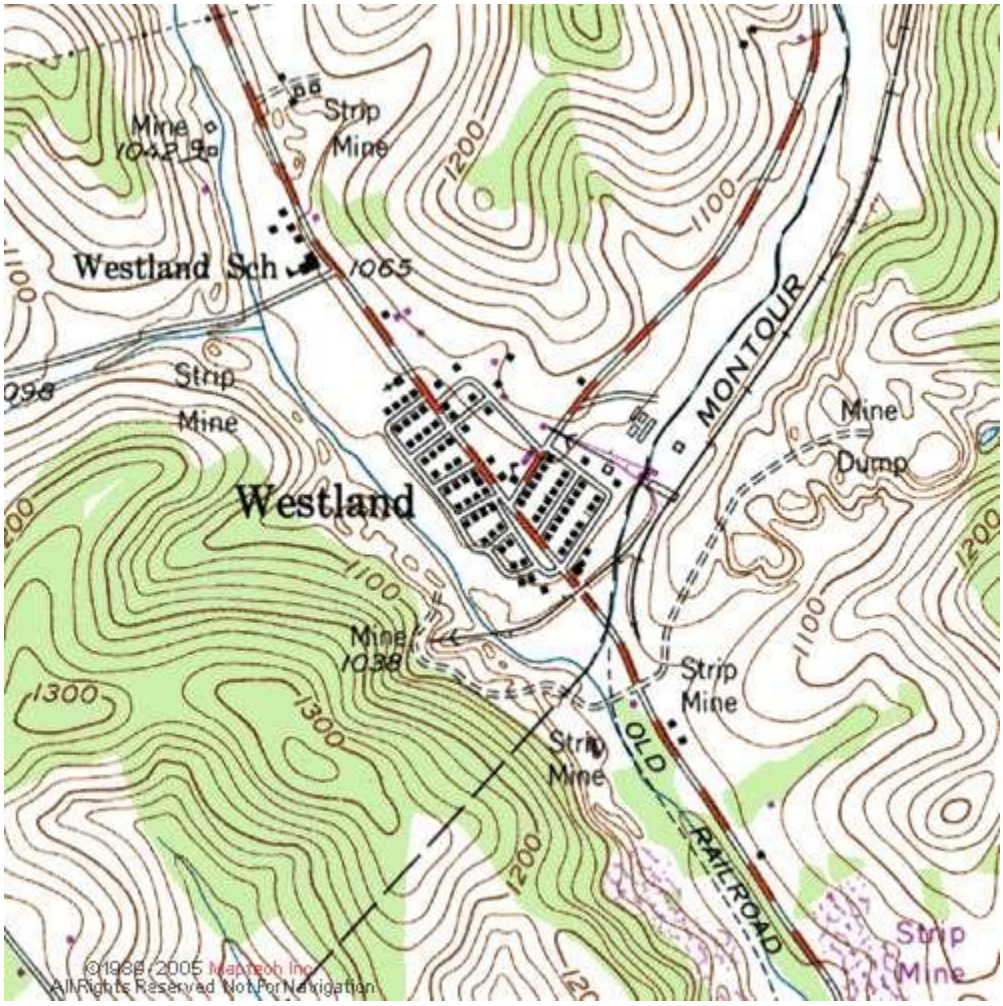
The following maps, drawings and photos illustrate the Westland No. 1 Mine.

This Google Earth image shows the Westland area as it existed after the mine was closed; the waste pile remediated, and before the new yard for the Mark West Gas Plant was built. The former Montour right-of-way is the straight clearing above the "W." The AMD pumping station is directly northwest of the "W."

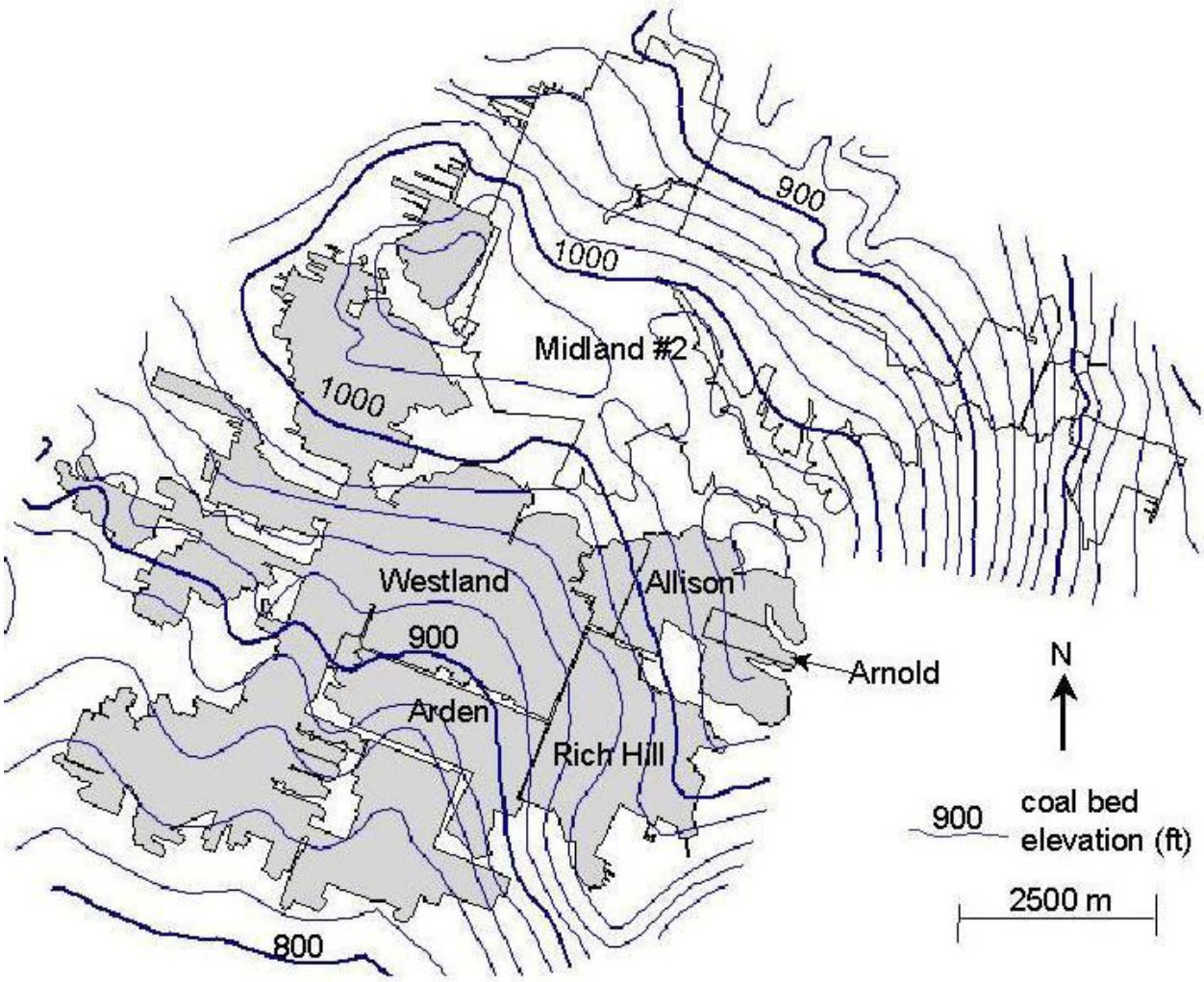
This is what the area around Westland looked like in 1905. Westland Mine has not been opened yet, and the Midland No. 3 Mine is at the end of the PRR Westland Branch. Also note the mine at Menden, south of Westland.



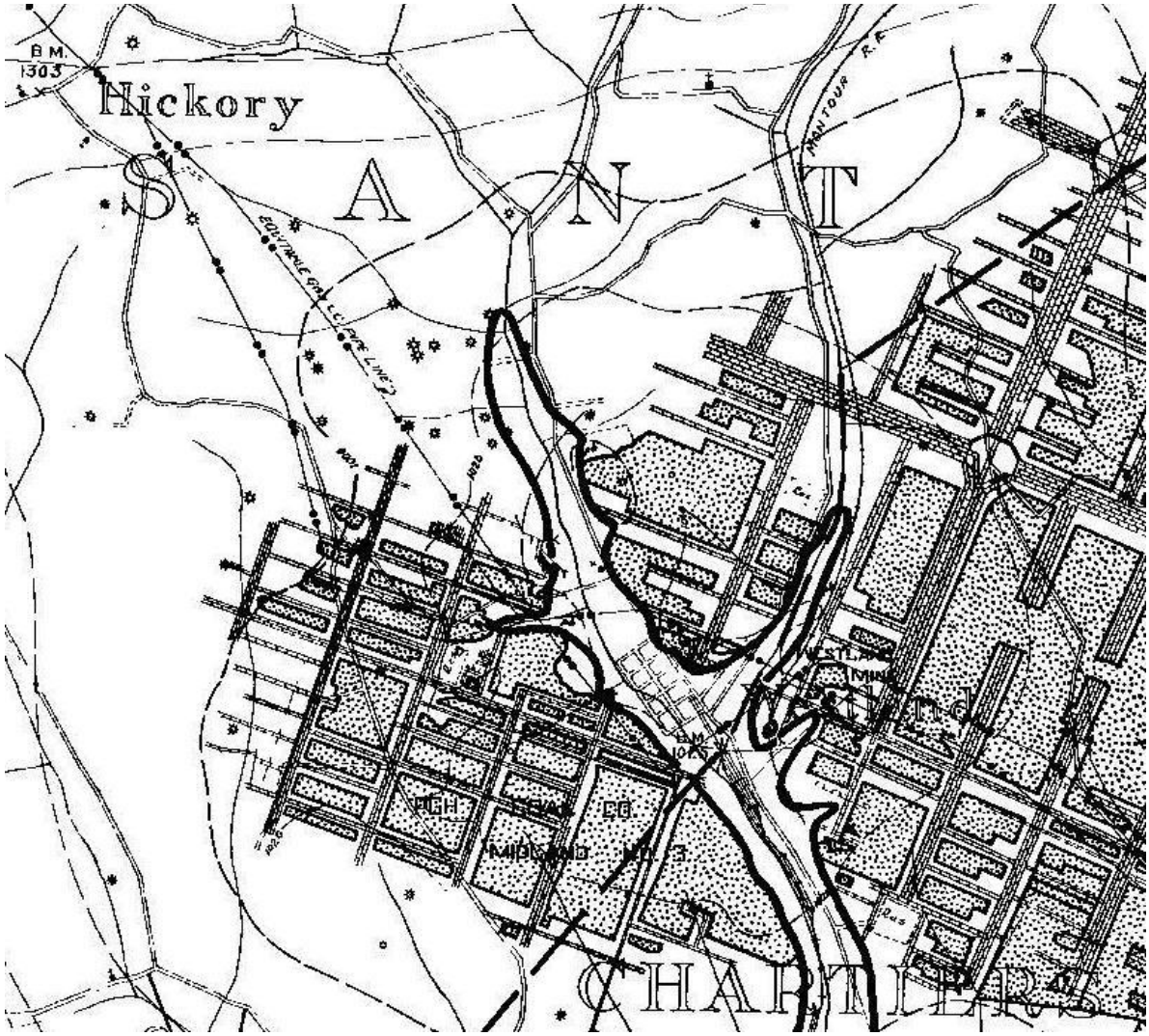
This topographic map shows the Westland No. 1 and No. 2 mines, with No.2 located north of Westland School. A 6,000-foot mine railway and bridge were built to bring coal from No. 2 mine to the tipple. The new track used the old trestle over Route 519, but a new trestle had to be built across the road south of the school.



This diagram shows the entire Westland Mine complex and the surrounding mines. Westland and Arden are connected in the northwest, and both are flooded. Drainage from Westland's northern workings are pumped to the Arden AMD plant on Arden Road southwest of Westland.



This WPA map from the 1930s shows the extent of Westland Mine. At this time, the workings on the west were still part of the Midland No. 3 Mine and most of Westland's production was coming from the workings in the southeastern section of the mine with work just beginning in the northern sections.



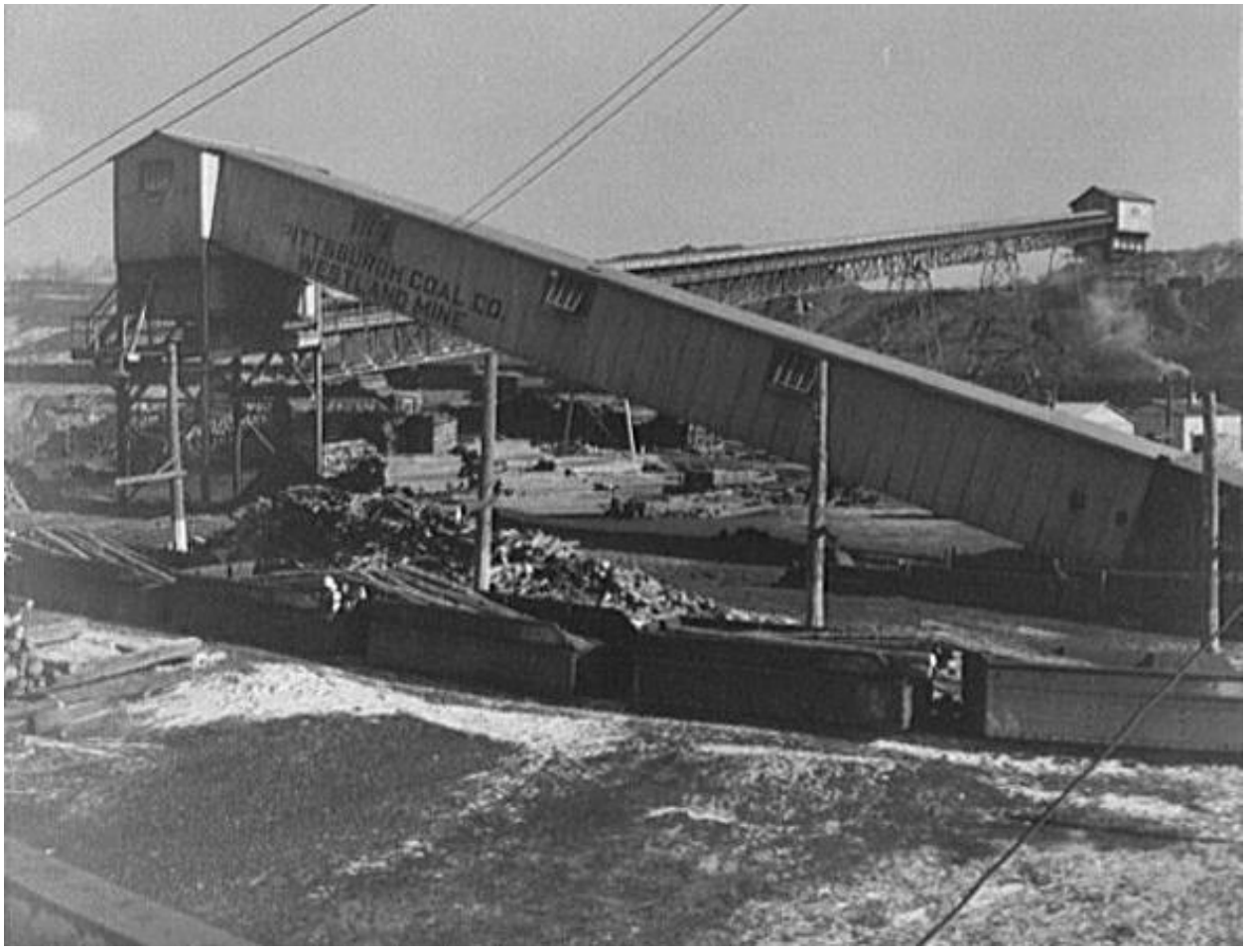
This aerial photo is from 1939. The waste dump is relatively small. Note the large number of miners' homes on the west side of Route 519 compared with today.

By 1958, the new section has been opened on the west side of Route 519 and the trestle is completed over the highway. It is obvious that coal was stripped along the western outcrop before deep mining began. The northern section now appears to be in production.

This 1967 view shows few changes over the past nine years, except that the waste dump is much larger.

The following photos were taken by John Collins for the Office of War Information during WWII.

This is a photo of the waste conveyor coming out of the mine and dumping onto a second conveyor to take the waste up the dump. Note all the timbers stacked on the ground and in the mine cars. The ones in the mine cars still need to be cut into posts.



This view is looking north. A string of loaded mine cars has exited the southern portal and is passing beneath the coal conveyor running up to the tipple. The waste conveyors are in the background.

This is the southern portal. Based on the clean faces of the miners, it is obvious this is a mantrip heading into the mine to begin work, and the angle of the sun would allude to it being the evening shift.

This is another view looking northward showing three of the locomotive and both loaded and empty coal cars. The train in the background beneath the shed is for taking miners into the mine. The shed helped keep the cars used for the mantrip dry. The extensive trackwork shows what a large mine Westland was.

These are the outhouses located behind the miners' homes at Westland. Although living conditions here were not as bad as some of the mines in West Virginia, they would be considered substandard today.

This was the company store at Westland. Note the man in the Army uniform on the right. This photo was taken during an inspection to evaluate living conditions in the town.

This shot was taken from Meadow Street and is looking due east. The waste conveyor is behind the garage and the coal conveyor is on the right.

This 1977 photo by Gene Schaeffer shows a Montour crew putting its train together at Westland Mine.

This photo was taken by Jason Capra in July 2012. It shows the new yard being built for Mark West LLC. Construction required filling in the old Westland Mine workings with concrete. The tipple would have been located approximately where the loading dock is located. The yard capacity is 200 cars.