

Montour No. 8 Mine (Bob Ciminel ©2012)

Montour No. 8 Mine was serviced by the Montour Railroad, but not actually located “along the Montour” main track or branches.

On June 22, 1916, the Lewis Run Railway Company was organized to build two miles of track from the Pittsburgh & West Virginia Railway’s Thompson Run Branch at Mifflin Yard southward to the Montour No. 8 Mine in Pleasant Hills along today’s Route 51. The Lewis Run Railway Company was merged into the Montour Railroad on June 17, 1917 and became the Montour Railroad Lewis Run Branch. The tracks to Montour No. 8 Mine were completed in 1918.

During the five years between 1919 and 1923, Montour No. 8 produced over 2.2 million tons of coal. The mine closed in November 1928, although other records show that the mine operated at least until 1937, but shipped its coal by truck because the Montour Railroad abandoned the Lewis Run Branch in 1930. Interestingly, the Lewis Run Branch never physically connected to the Montour tracks, but was service by Montour trains operating on the P&WV between Salida and Mifflin Junction.

In 1934, Montour No. 8 was opened by the McBride Coal Company and named the Willock Mine. The following table shows the production records for the mine under McBride’s ownership. The mine is not listed in the data after 1939.

Year	Tonnage	Days Worked	Employees
1934	3,082	56	19
1935	18,750	250	30
1936	14,000	170	30
1937	13,987	180	23
1938	12,794	198	24
1939	12,262	197	28

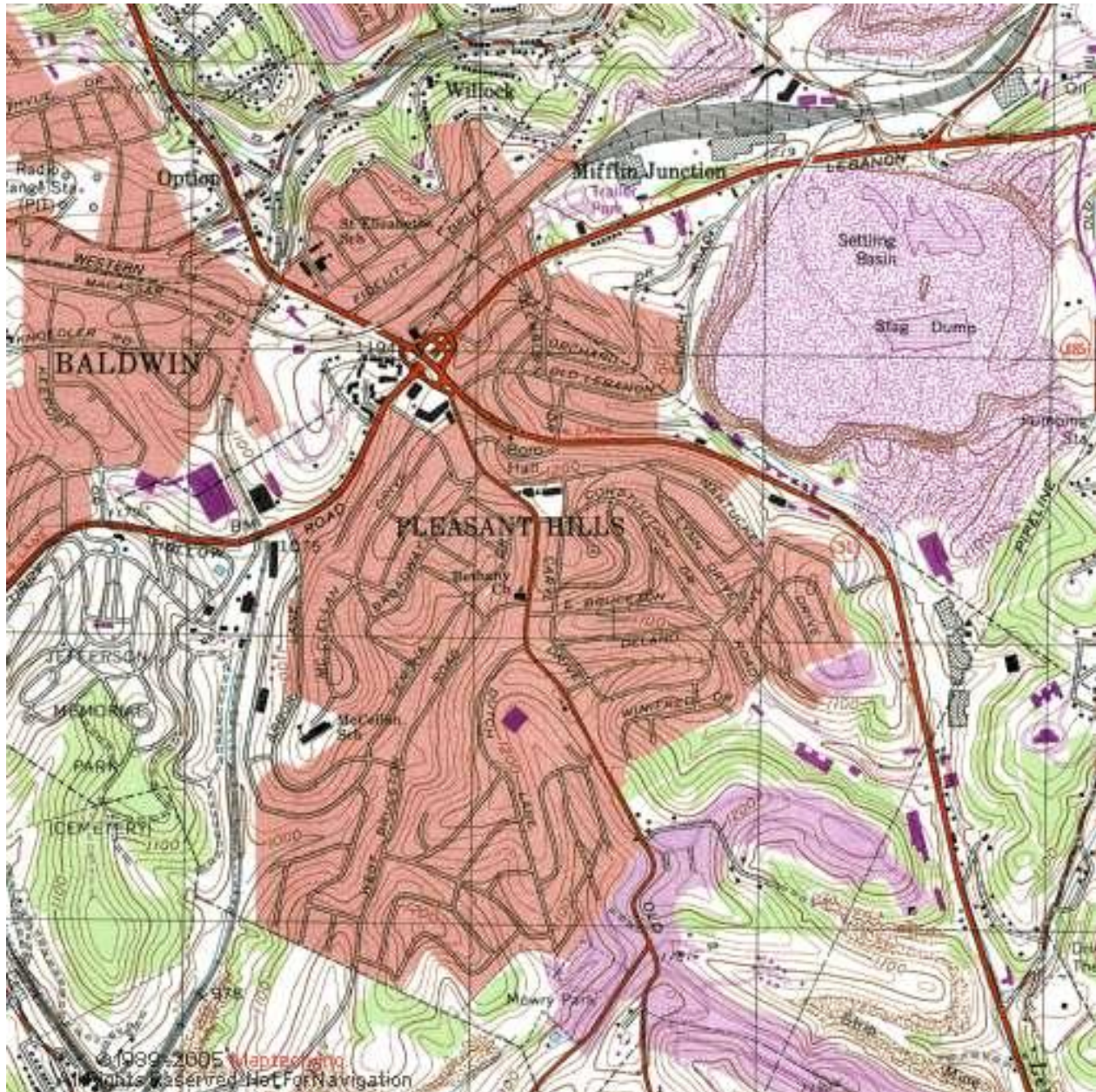
Some events that involved Montour No. 8 included the arrest of two men who became trapped in the mine in 1936 when they entered the idle mine to steal copper wire and became lost. They were rescued after 24 hours and immediately charged with larceny.

A more serious event occurred in January 2006 when homes located above the long-abandoned mine were damaged by subsidence. Bureau of Mine personnel pumped 80 loads of cement slurry into the old workings to try and stabilize the mine.

This Google Earth image shows the former locations of the Lewis Run Branch and Montour No. 8 Mine as they exist today.



This topographic map was updated before Century Mall was built on the old slag dump.



This 1938 aerial photo show the Lewis Run Branch right-of-way cutting through the area east and south of Mifflin Yard. The tracks followed the paved stretch of Route 51 down to the site of the mine tipple at the lower right.



This is a close-up of the abandoned right-of-way from the 1938 aerial photo.



This is a close-up of the original tippie at Montour No. 8. By this time it was the Willock Mine and was shipping coal by truck.



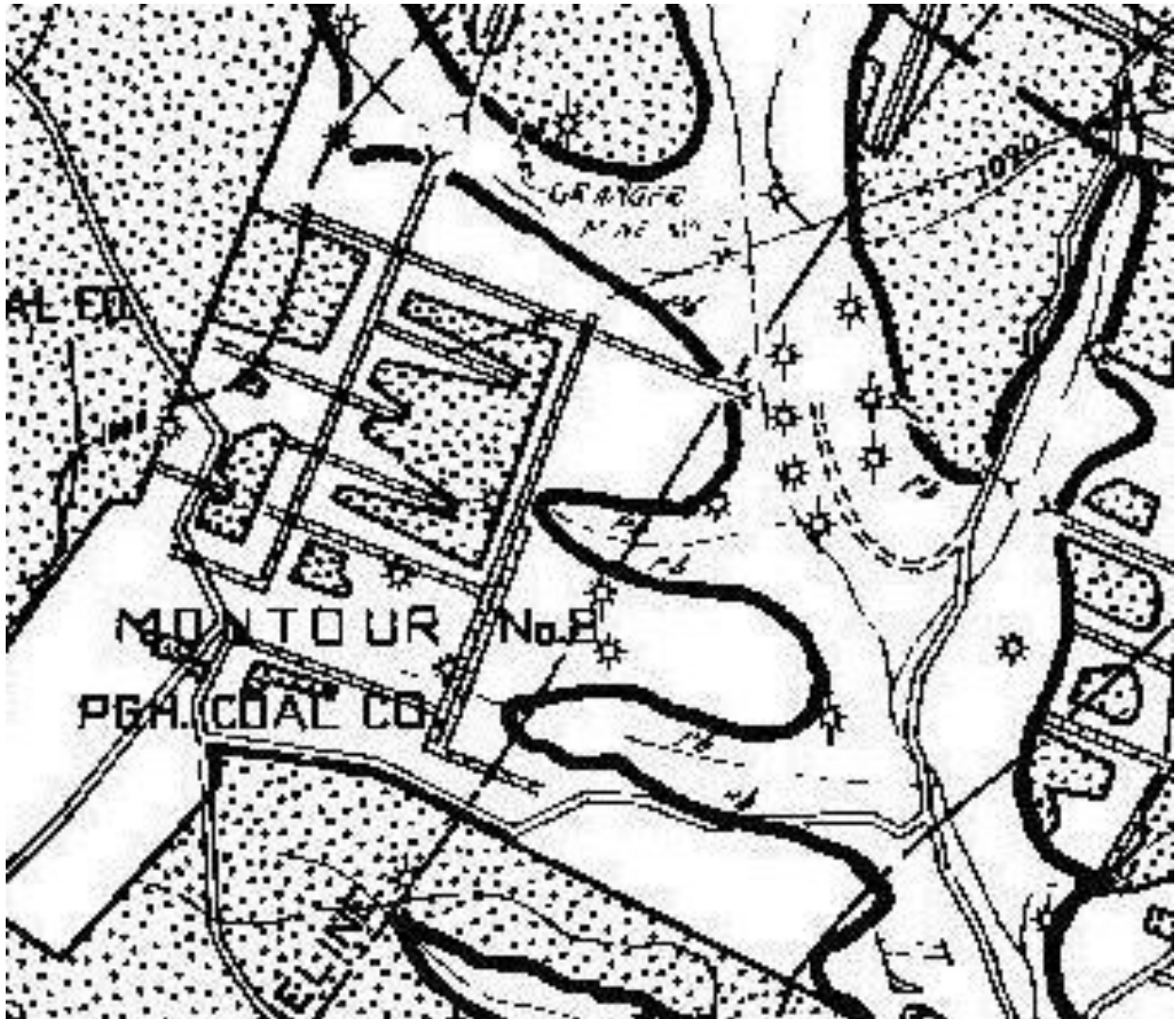
By 1957, developers had built a substantial number of homes on top of the old Montour No. 8 workings, something that would later cause many problems for current and future homeowners.



Not much had changed in 1967, except that a lot more houses were sitting over the former coal mine.



This 1930s era mine map shows two openings for Montour No. 8 Mine. Houses were built directly over the remaining mine entries that were left intact after the coal pillars were removed.



This Google Earth image shows the location of the mine subsidence that occurred in January 2006.

