

Montour Mine #1 – Southview

By Bryan Seip - Montour Railroad Historical Society

Montour Mine #1 was one of three mines opened in 1914 by the Pittsburgh Coal Company along the newly constructed Mifflin Extension of the Montour Railroad. It was located at Southview, near trail mile 20.5.

The other two PCCo mines were Montour #2 at Cowden – trail mile 23 - and Montour #4 at Hills Station – trail mile 30. Several mines owned by other companies were also opened as the railroad was extended from Imperial to Bethel Park and West Mifflin.

The Montour #1 complex sat in the now wooded valley along Miller's Run between the town of Southview and the current Wheeling & Lake Erie Railroad tracks. The mine abutted the Primrose and Jumbo Mines to the north.

The railroad spur into the mine was located near the Antil Street-Southview Road intersection at the beginning of the sweeping curve as the trail follows the roadside.



Montour Mine #1 at Southview, circa 1927. Gene P. Schaeffer collection.

Montour #1 was a typical shaft mine of the time, with 2 shafts dug about 100 feet deep down to the coal seam. One shaft brought men and supplies into the mine and hoisted waste rock and slate out to be piled on the near-by hillside. The other shaft serviced the loading tippie, bringing coal out of the mine to be cleaned and sorted before loading into railroad hopper cars for shipment. As it sat down in the creek valley, it was one of the shallowest mines in the area. Homes and businesses for the miners were built on the hill to the north side of the creek valley.

The accompanying photo is a view to the northeast circa 1927 showing the mine complex and the town of Southview. The track in the foreground was originally the

Wabash-Pittsburgh Terminal Railroad and is currently the Wheeling & Lake Erie. Above those tracks the tracks servicing the mine can be seen, which were operated by the Montour Railroad. The Montour connection is out of the picture to the right and the Montour main line runs behind the hillside at the far edge of the village. The building on the left sits beside the supply shaft and housed offices, storerooms and the miners' bathhouse. The darker building on the right is the loading tipple with the head of the coal shaft sticking up out of its roofline. To the left of the tipple is the power house and a fan house sits beside the supply shaft. The town buildings on the street closest to the mine were company stores, boarding houses and other businesses. Next were single family houses which were used by supervisors and company employees. Further in the background were the miners' houses, which typically were duplex homes housing two families each.

A feature article in "Coal Age" magazine in 1916 stated that the village at Montour #1 was considered to be a first class miners' patch. "The Pittsburgh Coal Company is progressive in its attitude toward its employees, taking reasonable precautions to insure their welfare and contentedness."

A blacksmith shop, ash pit and water tank were constructed to allow the railroad to do basic locomotive maintenance at the mine complex. A retired passenger coach was installed nearby to serve as a ticket office and passenger station.



Bill Stype acted as the ticket agent at Southview in 1922. He would eventually work his way up to become Superintendent of the railroad. Photo courtesy Karen Robbins.

The coal seam was about 4-1/2 feet thick and production from the mine reached 2,500 tons per day by 1930. The exact date of closing is not known. Coal production is listed in the PA Bureau of Mines report of 1932 but by the late 1930's, aerial photographs show the mine was closed. Although all of the mine buildings were torn down, some foundations still exist, but the valley vegetation has grown to hide all that remains of Montour Mine #1.

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