

Scott Mine – Nelson Industrial Park

By Bryan Seip - Montour Railroad Historical Society

The Scott Farm was located along the Montour Railroad main line at trail mile 4.5, occupying some of the valley and hillside along Montour Run at the current Scott Road and Park Manor Blvd. locations, in the area between the K-Mart and Robinson Town Center.

In 1914 a coal mine was opened on the hillside above the south side of the farm, with a portal entering directly into the coal seam near the current Lowe's store below the Montour Presbyterian Church. It was named the Hammill Mine, operated by the Hammill Company, which was headquartered in Crafton.

Coal was brought out of the mine and sent down the hillside to a loading tippie on a spur curving into the valley from the Montour Railroad main line. The switch into the spur was an eastbound facing switch, meaning that empty cars going into the tippie were shoved ahead of the locomotive, while loaded cars could be pulled out by the locomotive and taken directly toward Montour Junction in Coraopolis.

In 1920, the mine was taken over by the Camden Coal company and renamed Scott Mine. In 1931, operation of Scott Mine was taken over by the Montour Collieries Company. The mine operated for several more years, closing in the mid 1930's.



Looking north from the Parkway West hillside in 1962, Scott farm can be seen across the valley. At the right edge of the photo, coal hoppers sit on Scott Siding at the Scott Road crossing. County of Allegheny photo.

Scott Siding was constructed along the main line as a passing siding and a location to store rail cars when needed. Thus, some of the right-of-way along Montour Run Road included double tracks. The siding was also used in the 1960's to store surplus rail cars from the Montour's parent railroads, as seen in the accompanying photo of Richlyn Machinery's building construction in 1964.

The Penn-Lincoln Parkway was constructed along the hillside between Routes 22-30 and the new Greater Pittsburgh Airport in the late 1940's. The Parkway, along with construction of Montour Run Road in the early 1960's opened up the area for further development.

Nelson Industries acquired land on the valley floor with the intention of building an industrial park on the site. A request was made to the Montour Railroad in 1960 to provide rail service into the park, including a steel bridge over Montour Run. The railroad spur roughly followed the course of the previous spur used to service the Scott Mine.



In 1964, Richlyn Machinery is under construction in the Nelson Industries park. Surplus flat cars are stored on Scott Siding beside Montour Run Road. This view is looking south from the hillside near the current K-Mart. County of Allegheny photo.

Several industries built facilities in the park in the early 1960's, including McKesson-Robson, Richlyn Machinery and Wickes Furniture, all serviced by rail. Boxcars of furniture went to Wickes, a cold storage facility received and shipped refrigerated goods and machinery went to and from Richlyn, adding to the non-coal items shipped by the Montour Railroad.



Montour engines and caboose enter the Nelson Industries spur, crossing over Montour Run to service customers in the industrial park. The white building in the background is Wickes Furniture. The main line and Scott Siding are seen to the right of the train. The Parkway West can be seen running along the hillside above the train. Gene P. Schaeffer photo.

However, the fortunes of the coal industry and thus the railroad declined through the 1970's and '80's. The last coal shipments from the Westland Mine and the Champion Processing Plant occurred in 1983 and rail service was ended as the final segment of the Montour Railroad was petitioned for abandonment in 1985.

The Montour rails were pulled up in 1986, but the rails leading into the industrial park were owned by Nelson Industries and were left in place. Over the years, they have been pulled up for scrap but several buildings and parking lots still have remnants of rails evident in the pavement and the steel bridge over Montour Run remains as an abandoned piece of the railroad.

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