

# Industries along the Montour Railroad

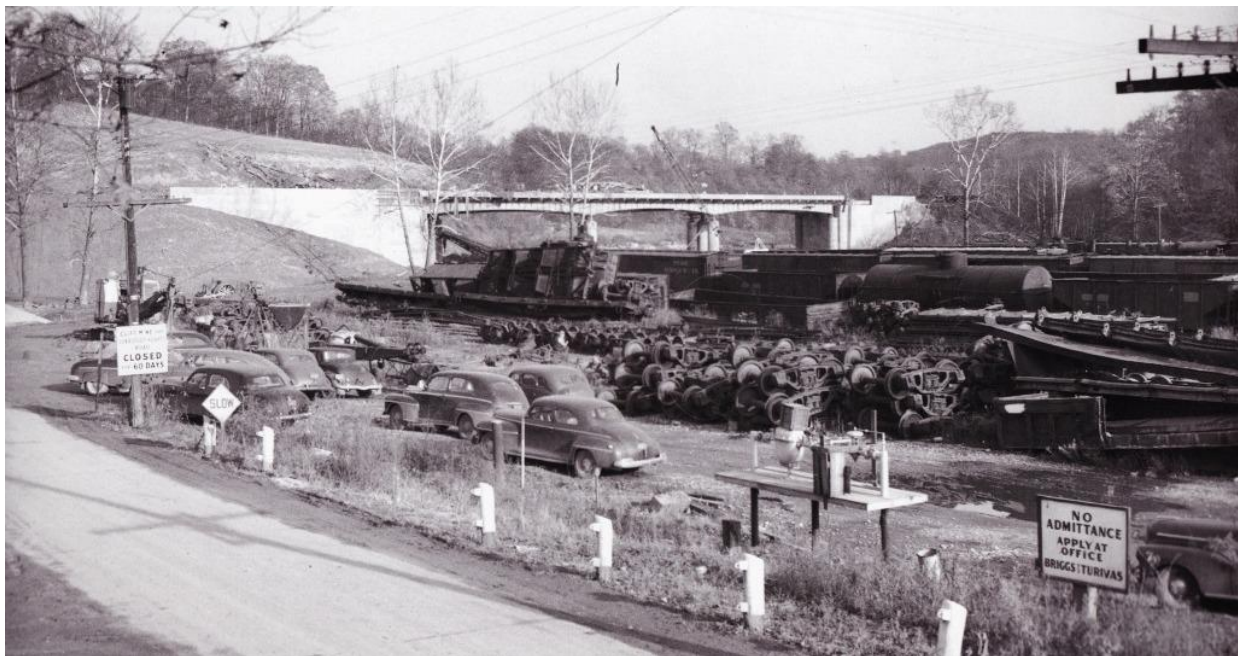
## Briggs & Turivas

By Bryan Seip - Montour Railroad Historical Society

One of the interesting industries serviced by the Montour Railroad was Briggs & Turivas. B&T, as it was known, was located along Cliff Mine Road, just off the Parkway West. There are now two office tower buildings located at the site, at Mile 5.2 on the Trail.

Briggs & Turivas was a large railroad scrap and servicing company, headquartered in Chicago. They opened their facility along the Montour Railroad in 1928 and operated there for over 50 years.

B&T was a scrap yard and more. They would bring in rail cars to be repaired, rebuilt or scrapped. During the steam era, used locomotives were often bought by B&T. Many of them were written off as scrap by the original owner railroad, but after being rebuilt at B&T, they were then sold and returned to service on another railroad that needed additional motive power. Steam locomotives from area railroads like the Bessemer & Lake Erie and the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie were among those refurbished and resold by B&T.



**The Briggs & Turivas yard is filled with rail cars and recovered parts in 1948. In the background, construction is taking place on the Parkway West. County of Allegheny photo.**

The B&T yard could be seen from the Parkway West, filled with cars of all types and sizes. It fueled the imagination of many a youngster as they rode by in their family's car. Rail cars and equipment coming in and out of B&T on the Montour Railroad gave a break to the sight of strings of hopper cars passing by on the main line.

Almost anything could be seen coming to B&T. There were box cars, tank cars, gondolas, hoppers and flats. Those destined to meet the scrapper's torch, wrecked cars and old cars were cut up and the steel recycled to the steel mills. At times, sparks from the welding torches filled the air and cranes were moving parts, panels and scrap into gondolas, adding to the busy scene in the B&T yard.

Gondolas filled with steel scrap were sent out of the yard, along with rebuilt cars which would then see additional revenue service.



**This 1956 view shows the yard at B&T. Two office buildings now occupy this site. Fred Bradley photo.**

When the Montour Railroad ceased operations in the early 1980's, B&T was left without a way to move their cars. B&T then relocated their operation to Dennison, Ohio, where they took over an old servicing facility from the Pennsylvania Railroad. B&T eventually closed the Ohio location when the PRR Panhandle Division ceased operations in the 1990's.

B&T also purchased some equipment from the Montour Railroad. When Montour operations ceased in the 1980's, B&T purchased the X1 crane from the railroad and sent it to Dennison, where it worked for another 10 years, until a main engine failure ended its useful life. Upon its later donation to the Montour Railroad Historical Society, the X1 was moved back to its home territory, where it is undergoing cosmetic restoration at Trail Mile 30.



**Looking south along Cliff Mine Road in 1947.  
County of Allegheny photo.**

Briggs & Turivas generated a lot of non-coal traffic on the Montour Railroad, with cars and equipment coming and going in both directions to the interchange points with other railroads. It fueled the interest of rail fans and of modelers alike, as any type of car from any railroad might be seen on the Montour at B&T.

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