

Solar Mine (Bob Ciminel ©2012)
Revision 1, 6/29/12

Continuing west (timetable east) on the Montour main track, we pass North Star wye and follow Boggs Road where we reach the switch leading to the Champion waste track and the spur into the Solar Mine on the west side of Potato Garden Run Road. Solar Coal Company opened the mine around 1931, but by 1943 the mine was being operated by the Pittsburgh Coal Company. There is no record of when the Coal Company took ownership of the mine.

Between 1931 and 1936, the mine was called the Solar 166 Mine and operated as both a deep mine and a strip mine. The underground workings covered about 380 acres, with 450 acres of surface mining. The combination of both above- and below-ground mining was necessary because the Pittsburgh seam was 120 feet below the surface in some areas. The main entries extended to the northwest while the cross entries ran northeast to southwest.

Production, operation and employment data for Solar Mine are listed below:

Year	Production (Tons)	Days Operated	Employees
1931*	298,369	251	13
1932	195,000	201	171
1934	170,454**	207	100
1936	197,983**	245	194
1944	221,458***	303	140

* Stripping only

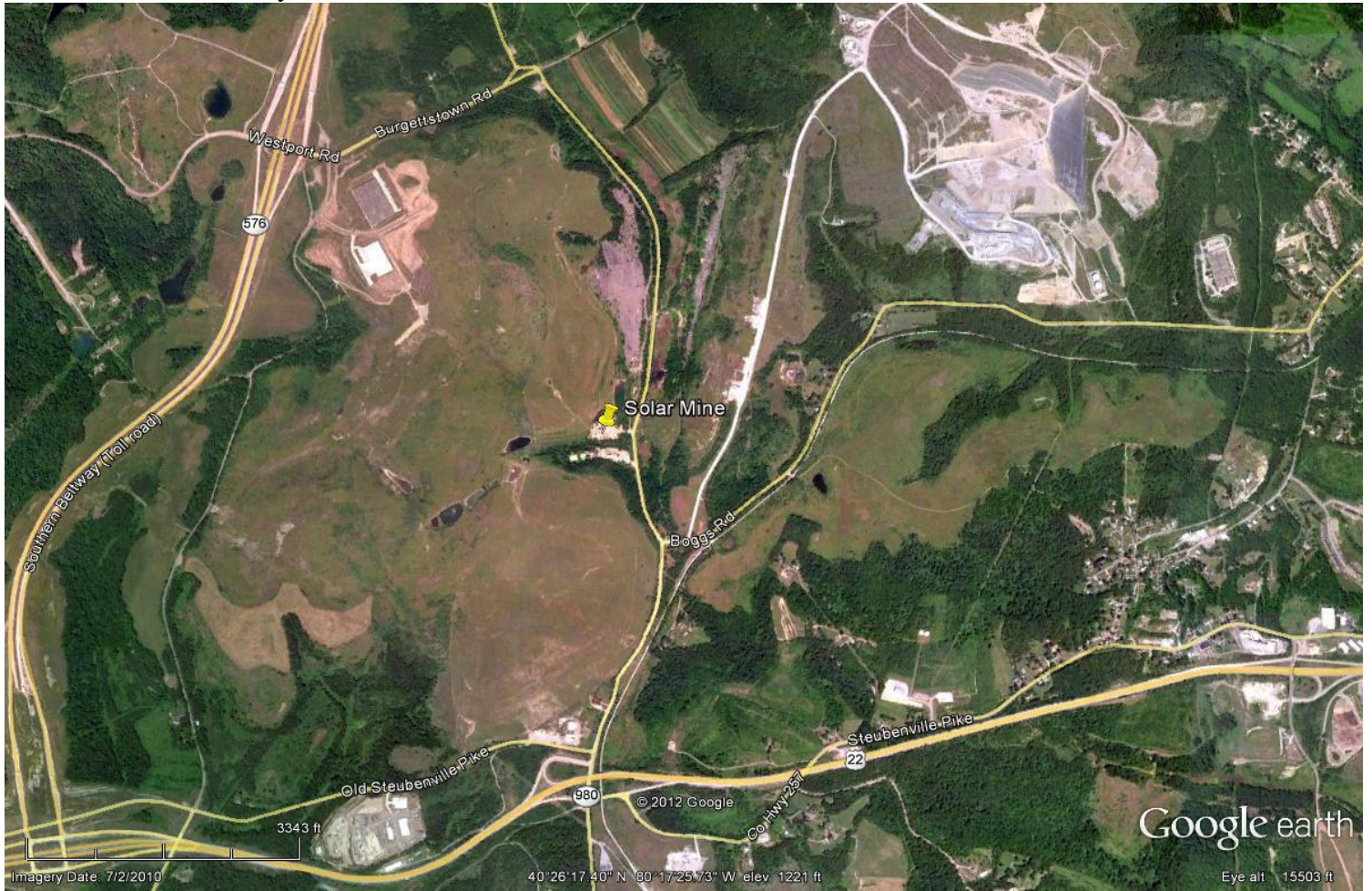
** Includes both rail and truck shipments

*** Rail shipments only

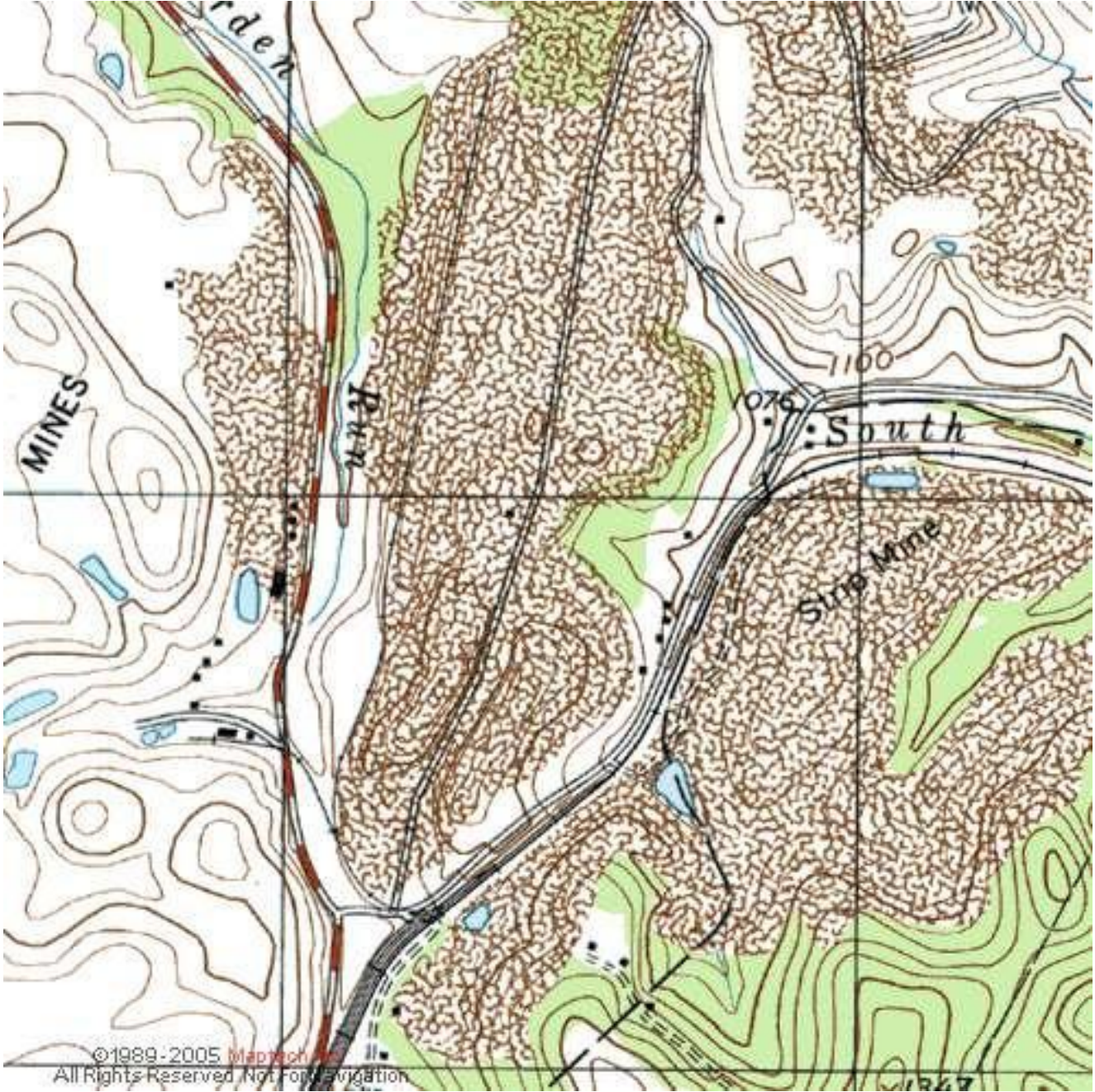
Information on the closure of Solar Mine is sketchy at best. Some Montour track diagrams show the mine site being owned by North Star Coal Company, and we also know that the Aloe Coal Company was engaged in strip mining in that area in the Seventies and Eighties.

The following maps and photos provide visual details on Solar Mine.

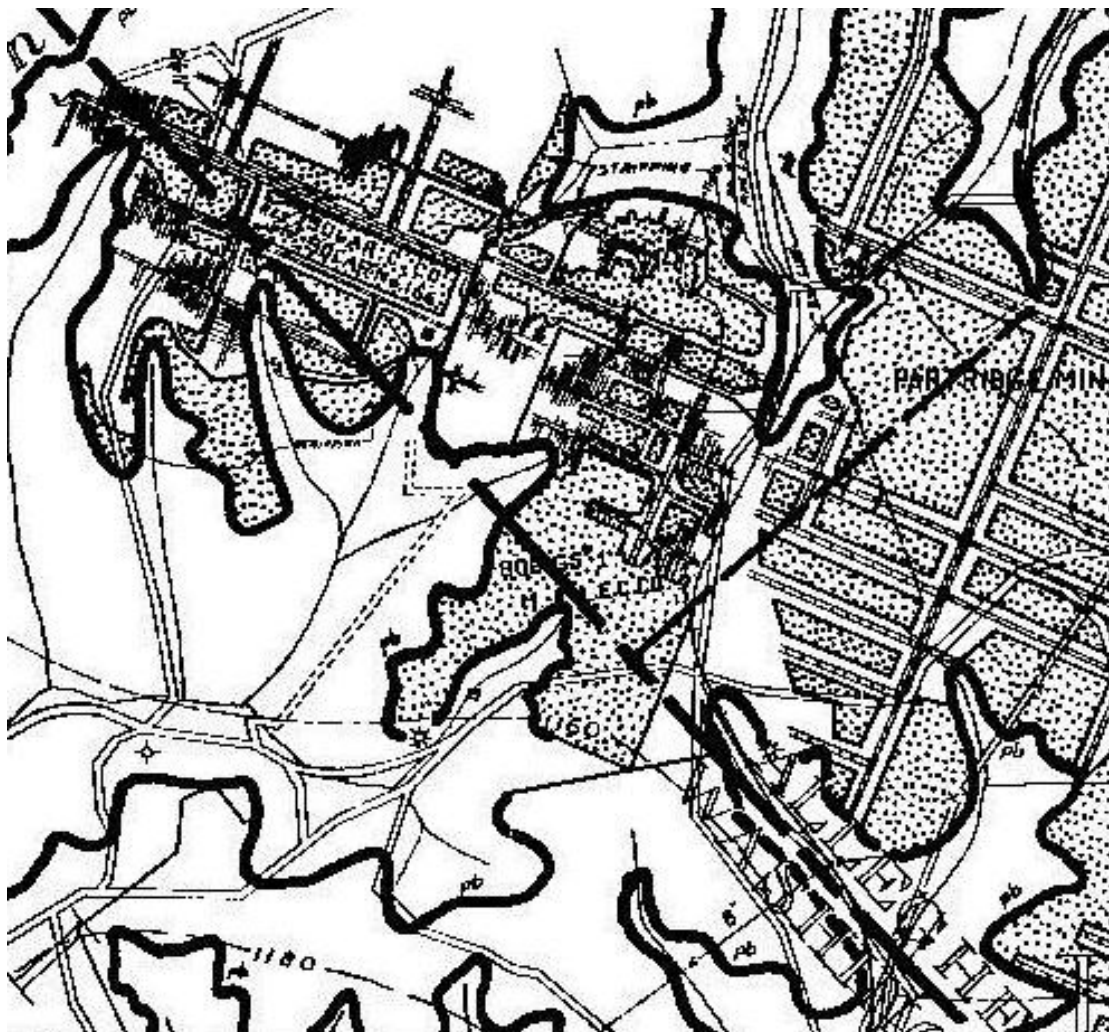
This is a recent view of the Solar Mine site. Santiago is in the lower right. The dark areas above the mine are the old waste dumps of the Champion coal washer, which were served by rail between 1928 and the late 1950s.



This is a topographic map showing the location of the Solar Mine complex before the Montour Railroad was abandoned. If you look closely you can see where the spur to the waste dump and mine crossed Boggs Road north of Boggs Yard.



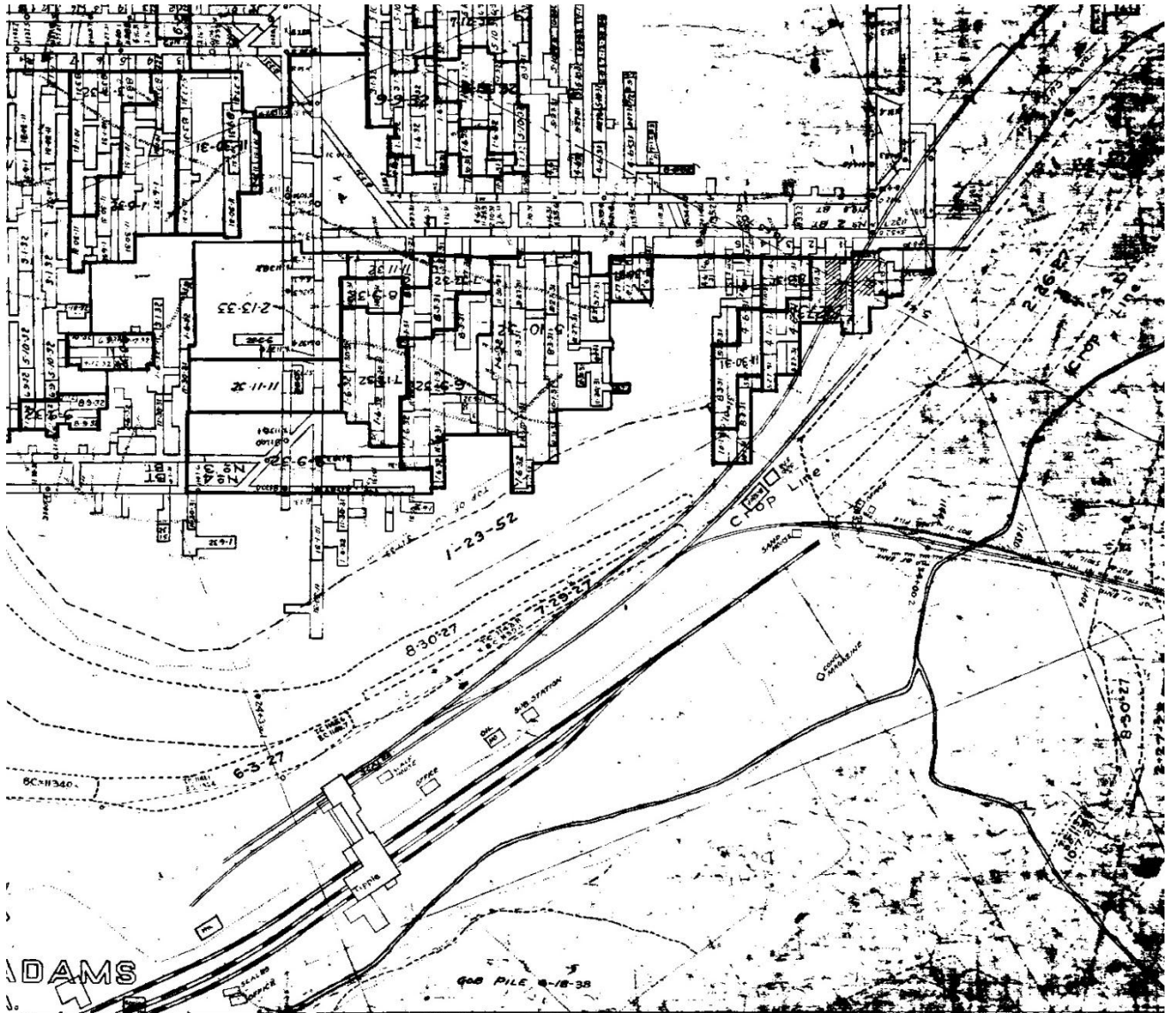
This 1930s era mine map shows the Solar Mine across Potato Garden Run from the Partridge Mine.



This 1939 aerial photos shows the Solar Mine tipple and the extensive stripping operations.



This is a map of the Solar Mine tippie showing multiple tracks going to the various mine entries the north, west and southwest. The deep mine was necessary because the overburden became too deep to allow economical strip mining. Note that stripping occurred near the tippie in 1927 and again in 1952. (The map is oriented with north at the bottom).



In this 1956 photo the tipple is gone but the mine spur appears to be still active.



This 1967 aerial photo shows the unreclaimed stripping operations at Solar.

