

Clinton No. 1 Mine (Bob Ciminel ©2012)

Clinton No. 1 Mine was not technically “along the Montour,” it was located about two miles up the Clinton Block Spur on the north side of U.S. Route 30. The mine was owned by the Clinton Block Coal Company (CBCCo), which was incorporated on October 26, 1917 with a capital of \$600,000 by Robert McCarrell of Washington, PA. By 1918, the company also began a strip mining operation on land east of the original mine site.

The Clinton Block Spur left the Montour main track a short distance east (railroad) of the Route 30 overgrade bridge and followed the North Fork of Montour Run on the west side of Route 30 to a grade crossing just south of the Burgettstown Road intersection. The old right-of-way going up to the mine is about a tenth of a mile beyond the entrance to the Findley Township Sports Complex. A passive acid mine drainage treatment facility was built on the old mine site in 2008 coincident with the construction of the Route 576 toll road.

Trains using the Clinton Spur (later named the Clinton Block Branch) would have to run by the trailing point switch at Clinton Block Junction, Milepost 9.97 (Trail Milepost 9.0) and then back into the spur and shove up to the mine.

In addition to the Clinton No. 1 mine not being along the railroad, the Montour also did not own the spur. It was built by the CBCCo in 1917. At the time the branch was built, the CBCCo said it would run no more than six trains per day at speeds not to exceed 15 mph.

Clinton No. 1 Mine was also operated by the Lebanon Block Coal Company of Imperial during part of 1920, but the CBCCo was the primary owner during the life of the mine. The mine was eventually taken over by the Pittsburgh Consolidation Coal Company around 1946.

Clinton No. 1 began as a drift mine with workings on both sides of Route 30, but also operated as a strip mine. Underground workings primarily worked the coal to the northwest and southwest, with the stripping operations working to the northeast. The tipple and rail spur were still serving the mine in 1939.

The Pittsburgh coal seam did not extend beyond the town of Clinton, although several small mines operated along Clinton Road. However, the Clinton No. 1 Mine was the primary exploiter of the seam between Imperial and Clinton, with the workings extending southwest to the intersection of Robinson and Burgettstown roads.

The coal seam at Clinton No. 1 was located about 1,160 feet above sea level and surface elevations were between 1,080 and 1,200 feet. This resulted in a self-draining drift mine that could easily be converted into a strip mine with only 40 feet of overburden needing to be removed to reach the coal. Having the tipple and railroad spur already in place also improved the economics of the strip mine.

The following images illustrate the Clinton No. 1 Mine and the Clinton Block Spur over their existence.

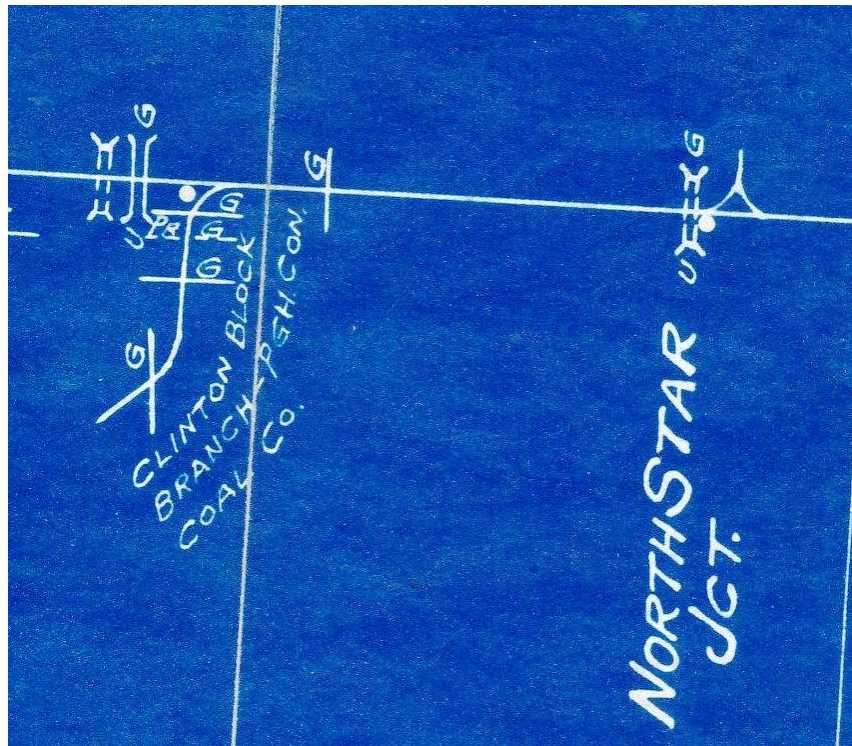
The Google Earth image shows the area around Clinton No. 1 Mine today. The passive treatment facility ponds are visible at top left.



This aerial photo shows Clinton Block Junction in 1939 with the spur connecting to the Montour main track and crossing the South Fork of Montour Run.



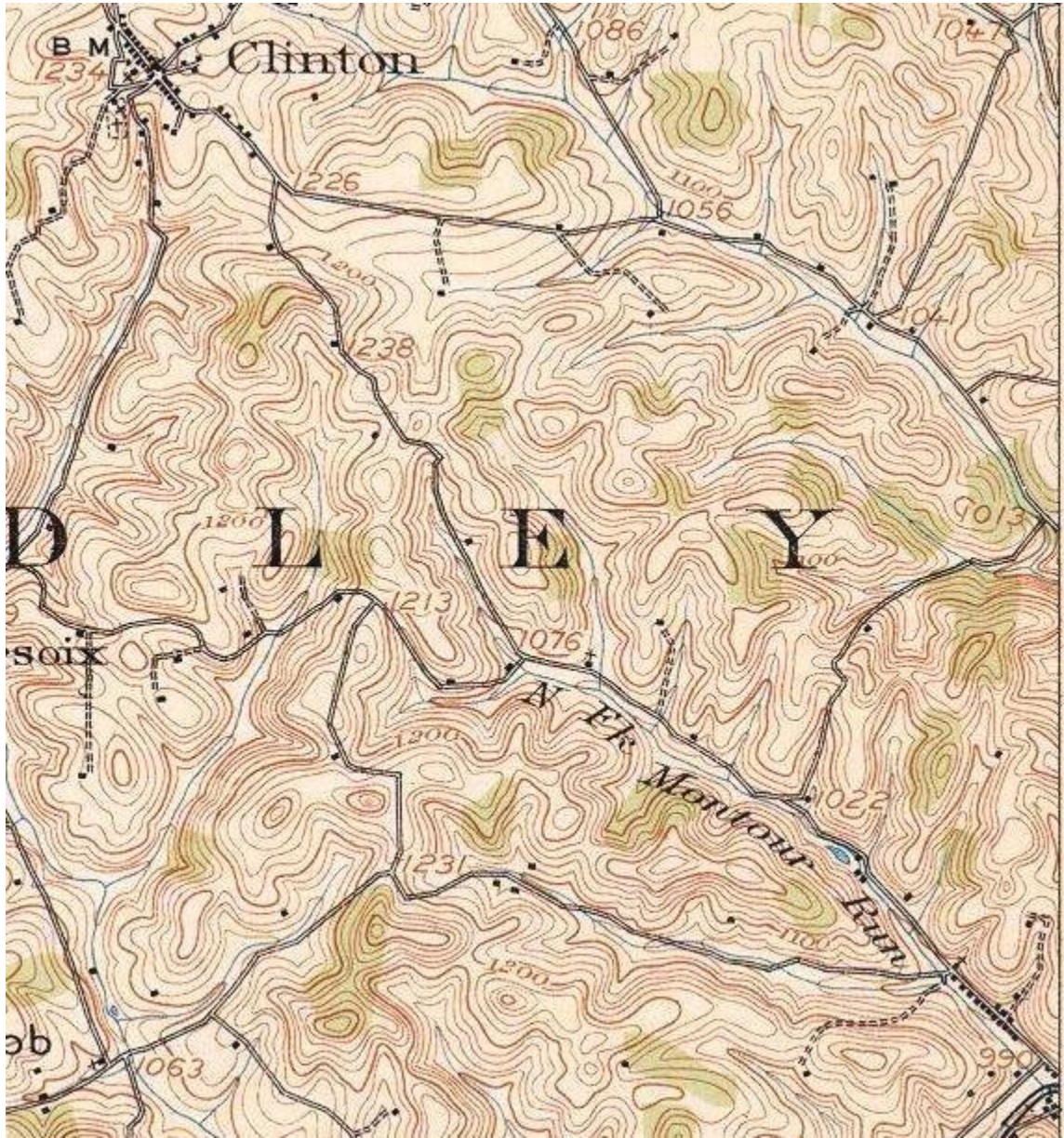
This is an excerpt from a Montour track diagram showing the connection to the main track. The North Star wye is also shown.



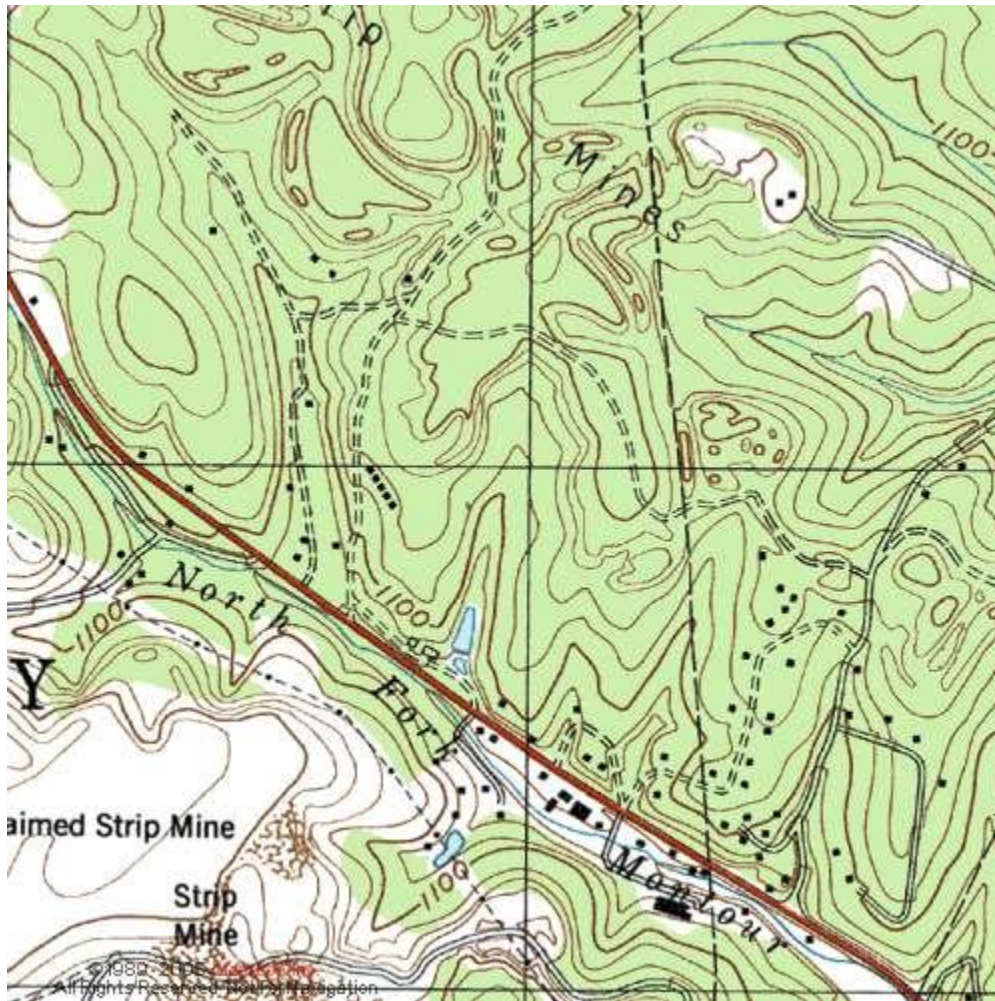
The spur up to the mine is shown running next to Route 30 in this 1939 aerial photo. Some of the miners' houses are also visible as small dark squares below the strip mine.



This 1906 map shows the area before the mine and spur were built. Note the church located above "N Fk."



This shows the most recent topography of the mine area. Active strip mining of the old underground workings west of Route 30 was going on in 1970, with the pits being backfilled with garbage from Pittsburgh.



This is a photo of the mine and the amount of stripping that was being done. The high elevation of the Pittsburgh seam (1,160 ft) at this location made stripping a feasible mining method.



This WPA map shows the extent of the underground workings in the mid-1930s. The dark lines show the location of the Pittsburgh seam.

