

Montour No. 2 Mine (Bob Ciminel ©2012)

Leaving Westland Mine, we head west by timetable down the Westland Branch/Midland Spur and rejoin the Montour main line at Gilmore Junction. After crossing Route 50 we skirt along the south bank of Millers Run through Venice to Cowden and Montour No. 2 Mine.

The Montour No. 2 Mine was opened by the Pittsburgh Coal Company in conjunction with the completion of the Montour Railroad Mifflin Extension in 1914. Both Montour No. 1 and Montour No. 2 were constructed and developed at the same time, with almost identical surface facilities, which included a railroad tippie with hoist for mine cars, a rock and supply shaft connected to a large brick building that contained the offices and miners' washrooms and lamp racks, and a nearby ventilation fan. As with Montour No. 1, the Montour No. 2 shaft was about 150 feet deep.

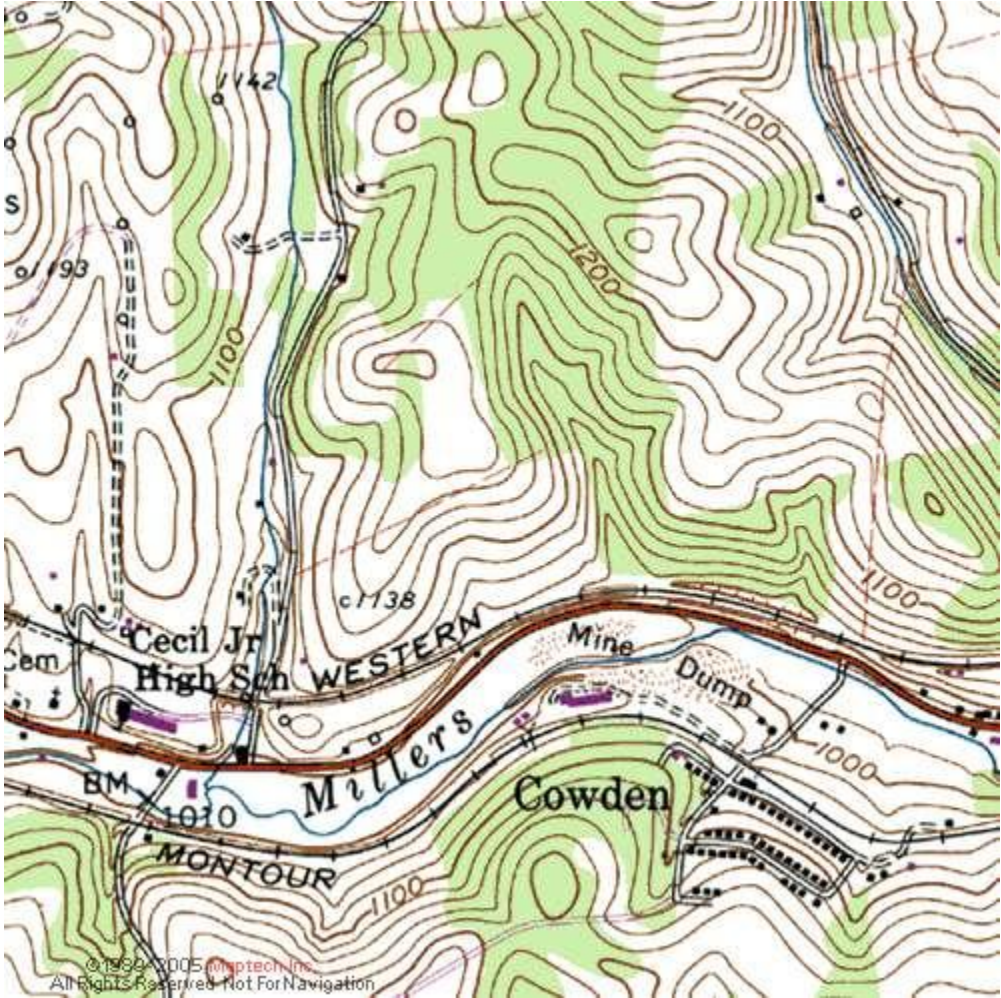
The mine was located on the Cowden farm, and the miners' village is called Cowden, although it has been referred to as "Pitco" and "Montour No. 2" in many publications. There is little information about Montour No. 2, and the mine closed before the first aerial photographs were taken in 1939.

The attached maps, photos and other images describe the mine.

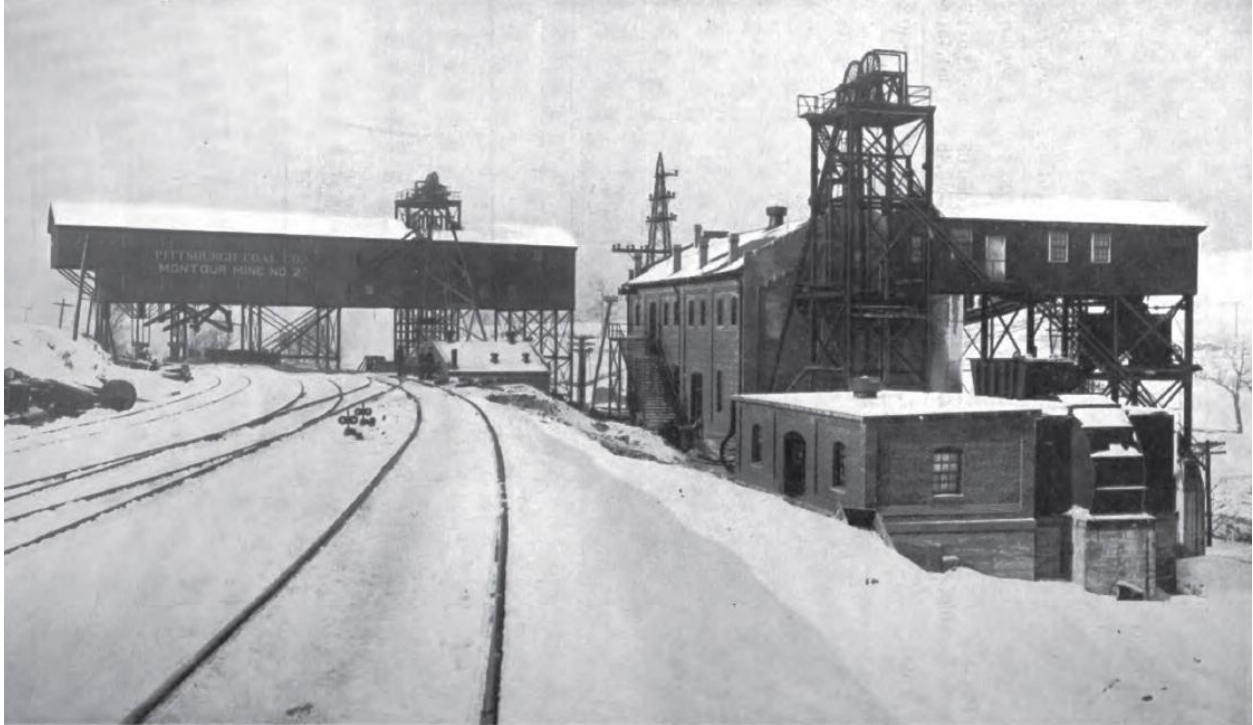
This Google Earth image from 2010 shows the present location of Montour No. 2. The tippie and other structures were located next to the "C" in Centrifugal Ct., and the miners' village was the group of houses along and southwest of Redwood Drive. The Montour Trail curves around the former tippie location.



The topographic map, which pre-dates the Montour Railroad abandonment incorrectly shows the mine entry as a drift instead of a shaft.



This photo from a Pittsburgh Coal Company advertising brochure shows the rock/supply shaft, fan house, office/washroom building and the tippie and hoist in 1917. The view is railroad west. The smaller building in front of the tippie is the hoist house for the coal hoist. Millers Run is on the right.



This photo from *Coal Age* magazine shows the substation and service building with the rock shaft in the background. It was about this time that the Pittsburgh Coal Company stopped generating electricity at its individual mines and began purchasing power from the West Penn Power Company, who's Board of Directors was comprised of many of the coal company's executives.



FIG. 3. REAR VIEW OF SUBSTATION AT MONTOUR
MINE NO. 2

This advertisement by the Vulcan Iron Works shows the main coal hoist that was installed at Montour No. 2.

THE Pittsburgh Coal Company has been one of the steadiest purchasers of Vulcan Hoists.

This new installation at Montour Mine #2, Cowden, Penna., is interesting in that it shows the main hoist.

The motor develops three hundred h.p. on a line current of twenty-two hundred volts.

This hoist is practically identical with a large number of other Vulcans which the Pittsburgh Coal Company has purchased from time to time.

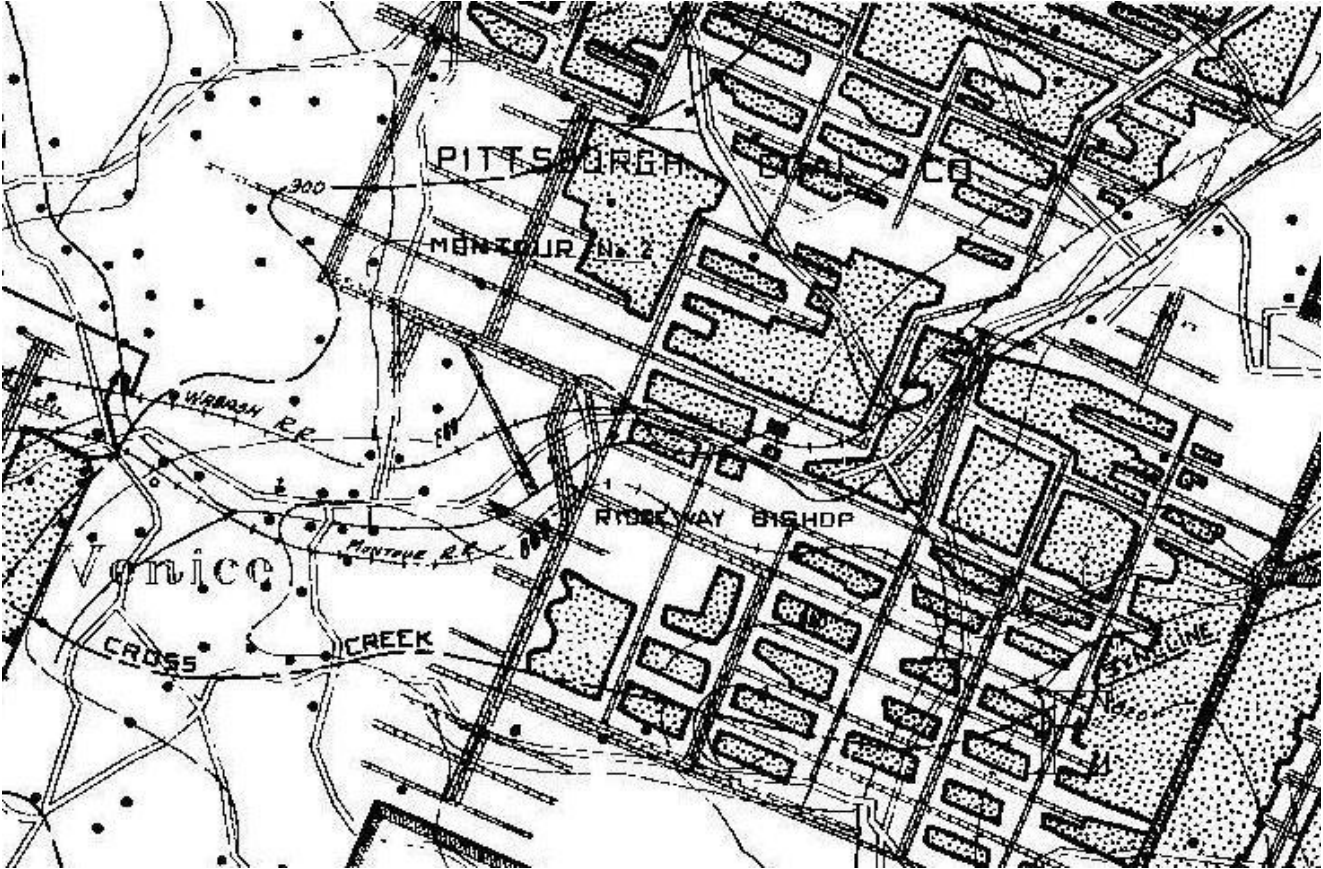


It embodies the same elements of safety, economy and year-in-year-out reliability that have made Vulcans the first choice of the largest miners in the country.

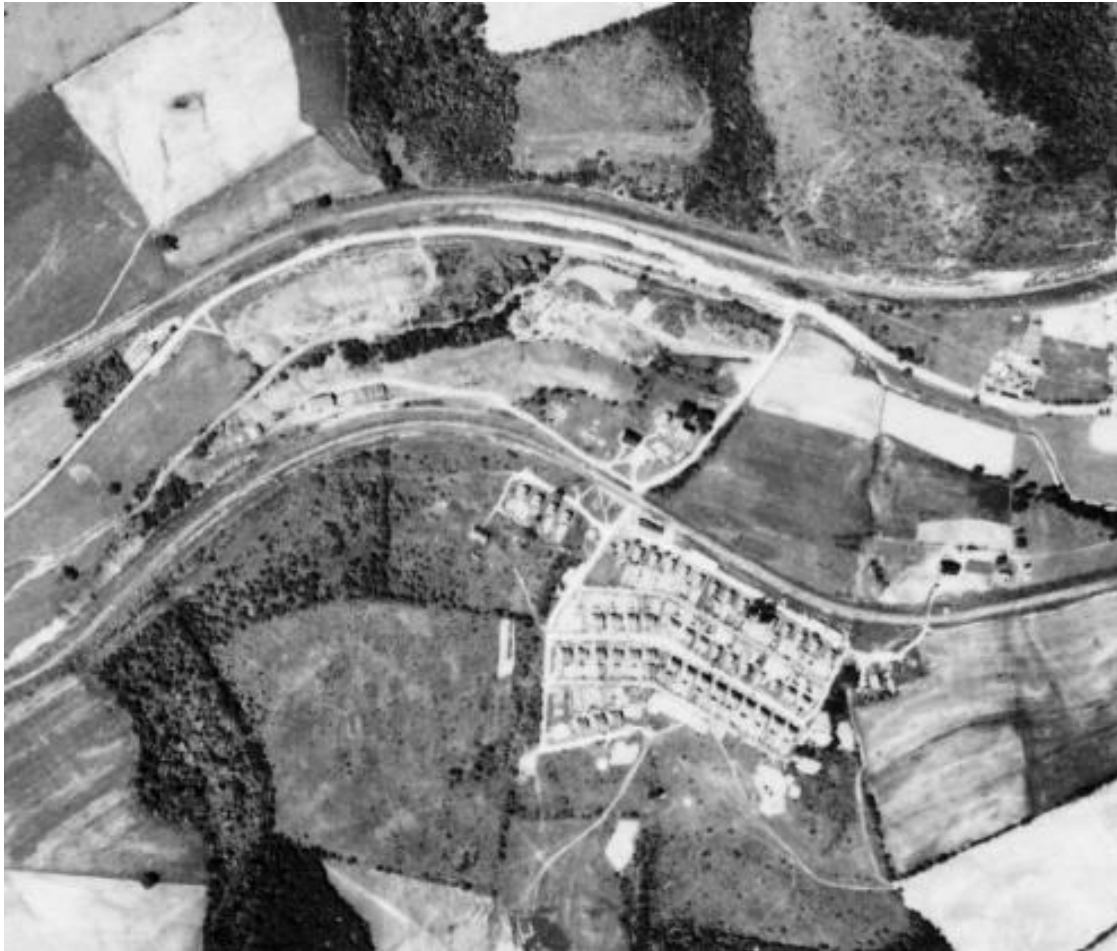
Vulcan Iron Works

1744 Main Street
Wilkes-Barre, Pa.
New York
Chicago

This WPA 1930s era map shows the underground workings of Montour No. 2. The shaft and tibble were located just above the "R" in Ridgeway Bishop. Montour No. 2 Mine eventually took over the coal reserves allocated to the Ridgeway-Bishop Mine. The Bishop Mine operated between 1892 and 1898; whereas the Bishop Mine began operation in 1903 and was operated by the Pittsburgh Coal Company until 1912 when its reserves were reassigned to Montour No. 2 Mine.



This 1939 aerial photo shows the remnants of the Montour No. 2 Mine after the tippie was removed. Some of the surface structures remain and the waste dumps are clearly visible. The miners' village at Cowden looks almost identical to the one at Montour No. 1 Mine at Southview.



Not much has changed in this 1958 aerial photo; however, the village of Cowden is looking more like a community than a cluster of miners' homes. As with most of the abandoned mines from this period, the waste dumps have not been remediated.



This 1967 photo shows some changes to the waste dump on the east side of the former mine site. I recall from trips out to Southview in the late 1950s that the dump had spontaneously combusted and had become a source of red dog for the local roads and alleys.

