

Henderson No. 1 (Bob Ciminel ©2012)

The coal mine that could have been Montour No. 3 was opened on McPherson Run north of Morganza Road by the Henderson Coal Company around the time the Montour Mifflin Extension became operational in late 1914. With an above ground layout similar to that used at the Montour No. 1 and No. 2 and National No. 3 mines, Henderson No. 1 was a twin-shaft deep mine that entered the Pittsburgh coal seam about 260 feet below ground. The miners' village was appropriately named Hendersonville in honor of Mr. Henderson. Local historian Pam Nixon lived in Hendersonville and has offered tours of the village in the past.

As with most the early mines along the Mifflin Extension, records are inconsistent. However, there was one area where Henderson No. 1 achieved notoriety that still echoes today.

At 6:20 a.m. on March 13, 1917 a methane explosion ripped through the mine during the changeover from night shift to day shift. Thirty eight miners were in the mine when the explosion happened and only 24 made it out alive. Fourteen of their co-workers were killed. As with most accidents at that time in the history of coal mining, a coroner's jury ruled that the accident was caused by the miners and the coal company was not held liable for deaths or injuries. Supposedly the Fire Boss, whose job was to inspect all the working areas for flammable gas, had checked the No. 10 butt entry where the explosion originated at 5 a.m. but found no large accumulations of methane. The investigators and jury determined the explosion was caused by a spark from the trolley wire as a coal-cutting machine was being moved from the No. 3 face entry into No. 10 butt. According to the jury, ". . . this accumulation of gas and short circuit of the wire was overlooked by Fire Boss [name omitted]. However, we do not believe his neglect was willful. His inspection of his section of the mine appears to have been too hurriedly and too carelessly made. We find occasion to censure Mine Foreman [name omitted] on the indefinite, incomplete and inaccurate reports of conditions inside the mine, as shown by his daily reports for 6 days prior to the explosion."

The following miners were killed in the Henderson No. 1 explosion:

William Askowski (Russian)	23	Married
Daniel Gossett (Belgian)	23	Single
Joseph Gossett (Belgian)	28	Single
Matro Jakom (Austrian)	33	Married, 1 Child
Steve Jatkowic (Austrian)	31	Single
Harry Lesock (Austrian)	38	Married, 2 Children
Joe Mishel (Austrian)	26	Married, 1 Child
George Mulish (Austrian)	39	Married, 4 Children
John Palen (Austrian)	34	Married, 2 Children

Mike Philip (Austrian)	39	Married, 4 Children
John Rozam (Austrian)	31	Married, 3 Children
George Smalia (Austrian)	22	Single

Henderson Coal Company operated the mine until April 1942 when it was purchased by the Pittsburgh Coal Company. The mine supposedly operated into the 1950s, but an exact date when the mine closed was not found. Henderson Mine is not listed in the 1947 Montour Railroad employee timetable, indicating it was no longer in operation, but may not have been abandoned. The company store is still standing and most of the original miners' houses, which could be purchased by the miners in 1942, are still there.

The following table shows some of the production numbers for Henderson No. 1:

Year	Rail	Truck	Days	Employees
1934	143,024	22,000	138	281
1936	205,140	23,489	191	292
1944	191,276	0	299	174

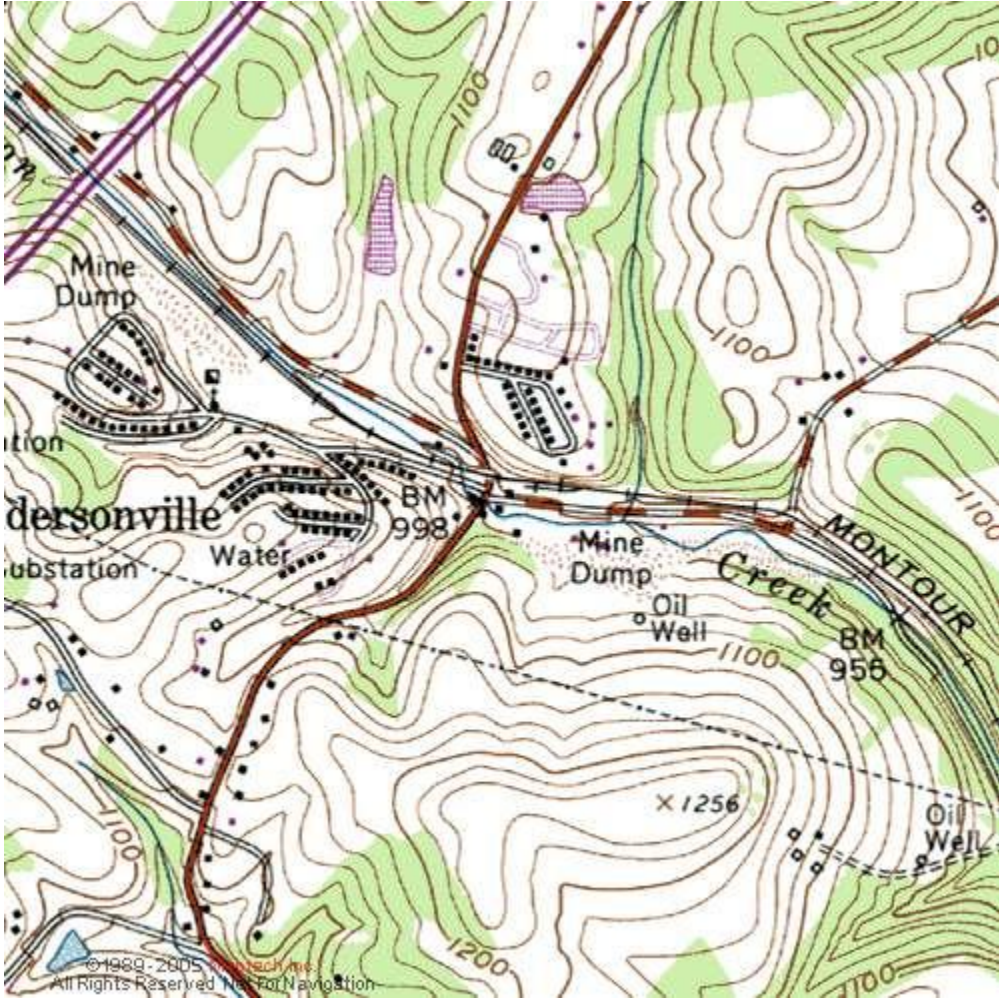
The following maps and images illustrate some facets of the Henderson No. 1 mine.

This Google Earth image shows Hendersonville in 2012. The two waste dumps associated with the mine are visible to the northwest and southeast of the village. The dump at lower right was leveled for an industrial building.



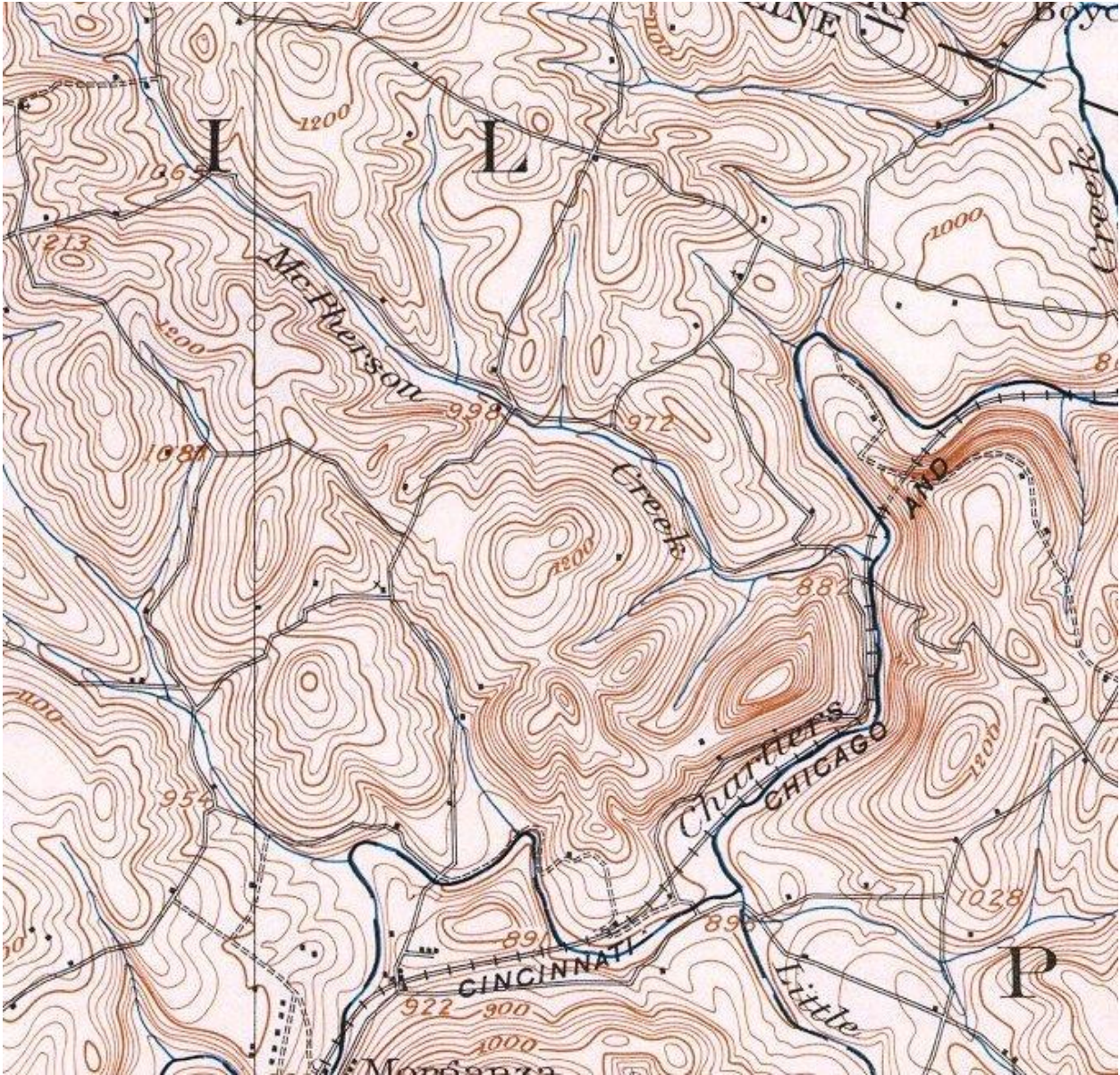


The topographic map only shows a single shaft at Henderson No. 1. The absence of tracks at the tipple indicates that the map was updated after the mine had closed. Note that waste dumps were located on both sides of Morganza Road.





This 1905 map shows the location of Henderson No. 1 before it was built. The mine would be located above and to the left of the “998” elevation, which represented the elevation of the intersection of Morganza and Georgetown Roads. The Montour Railroad followed the north bank of McPherson Run.

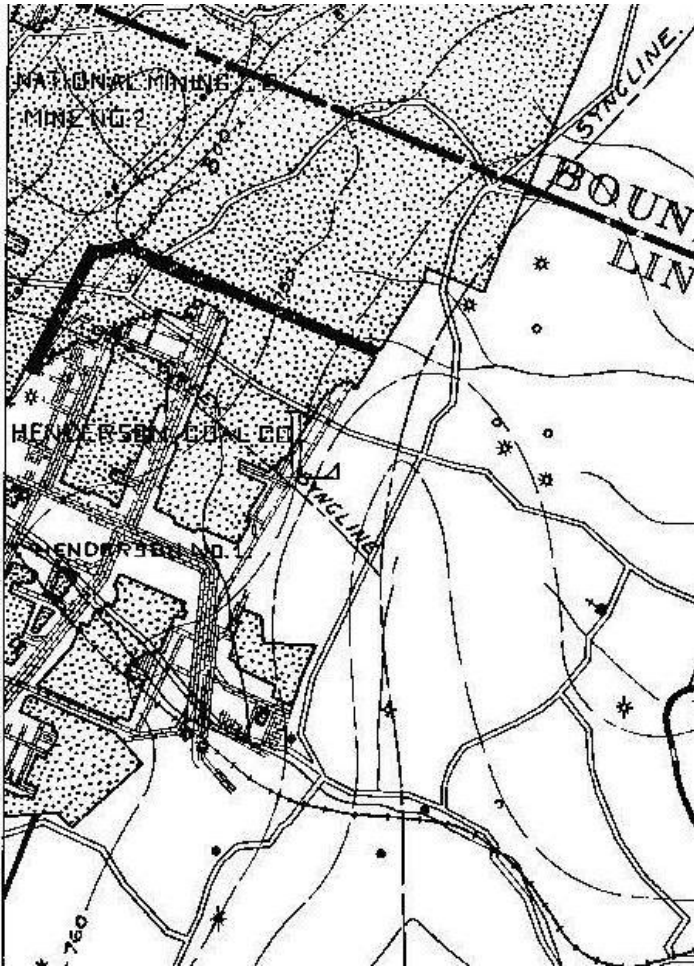




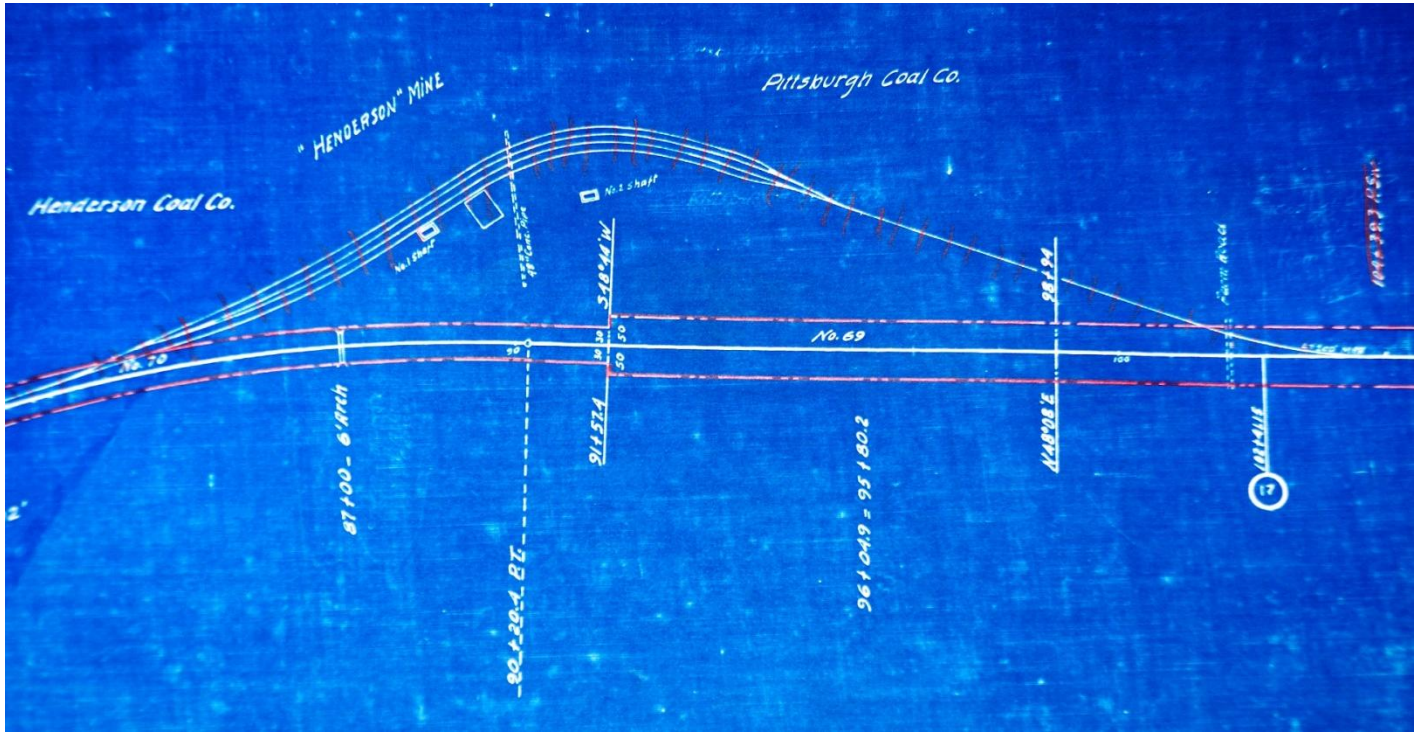
Henderson No. 1 looking toward the southeast. Note the large number of mine posts between the tracks and the fan and power house. The length of the posts is an indication of the thickness of the coal seam, which averaged 67 inches at this location. The smaller hoist was for men and materials. The Montour tracks are visible in the background.



This mine map shows the barrier pillar between Henderson No. 1 and National No. 2. Barrier pillars were required by the state mining laws and were about 100 feet thick. The two Henderson shafts were located where the main entries passed beneath the Montour tracks.

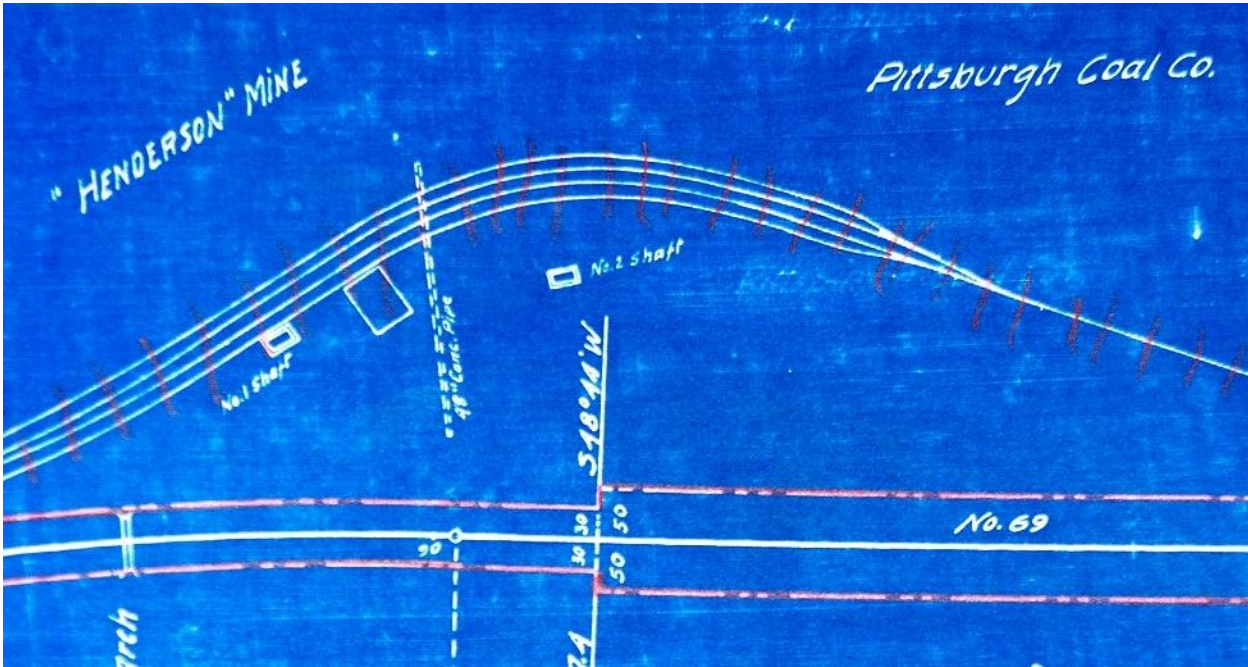


Gene Schaeffer provided this blueprint of the tracks going into the Henderson No. 1 tippie. An enlarged version is on the next page.

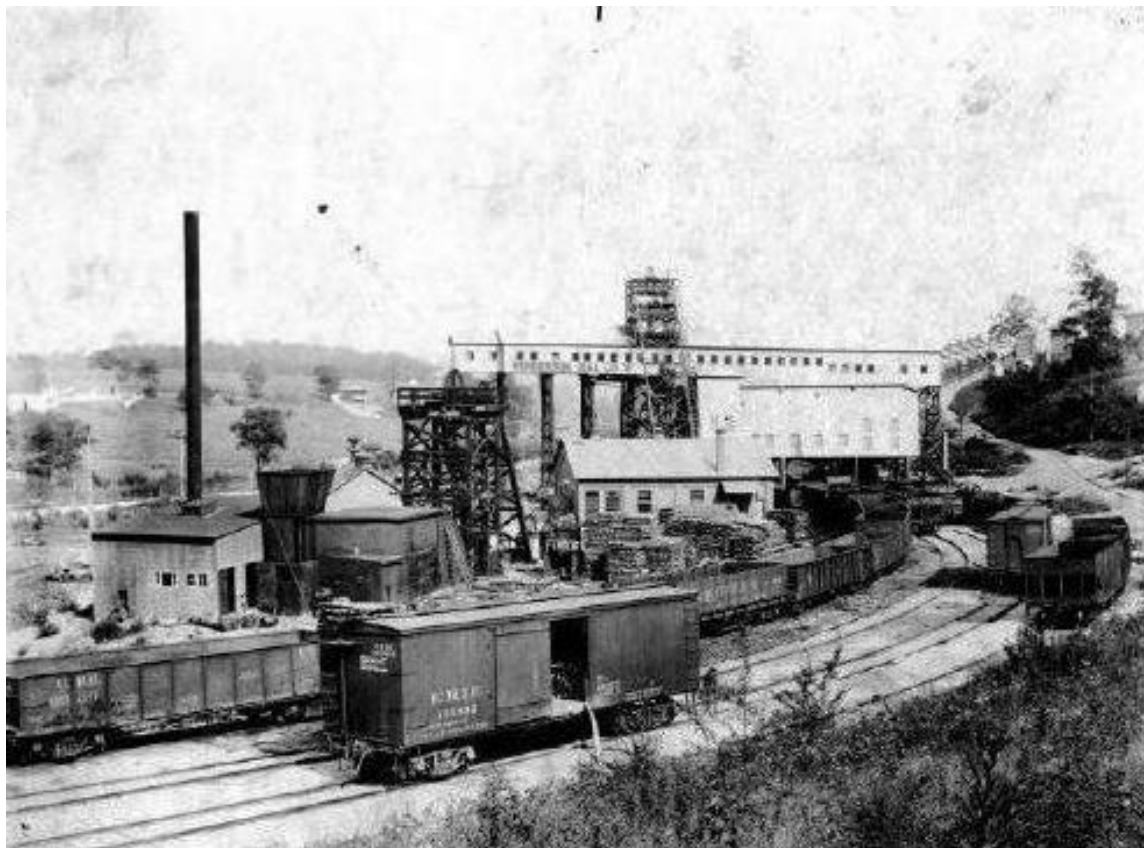




The No. 1 Shaft was the tipple location. No. 2 Shaft was the service and ventilation shaft. The fact that Pittsburgh Coal Co. is the owner indicates that the blueprint was made after April 1942, but the crossed out tracks on the siding show it was revised after the mine closed and the tracks were removed. Additionally, the absence of the red border along the mine tracks show that they were not owned by the Montour. Also note that the width of the Montour's right-of-way was reduced from 100 feet to 60 feet.

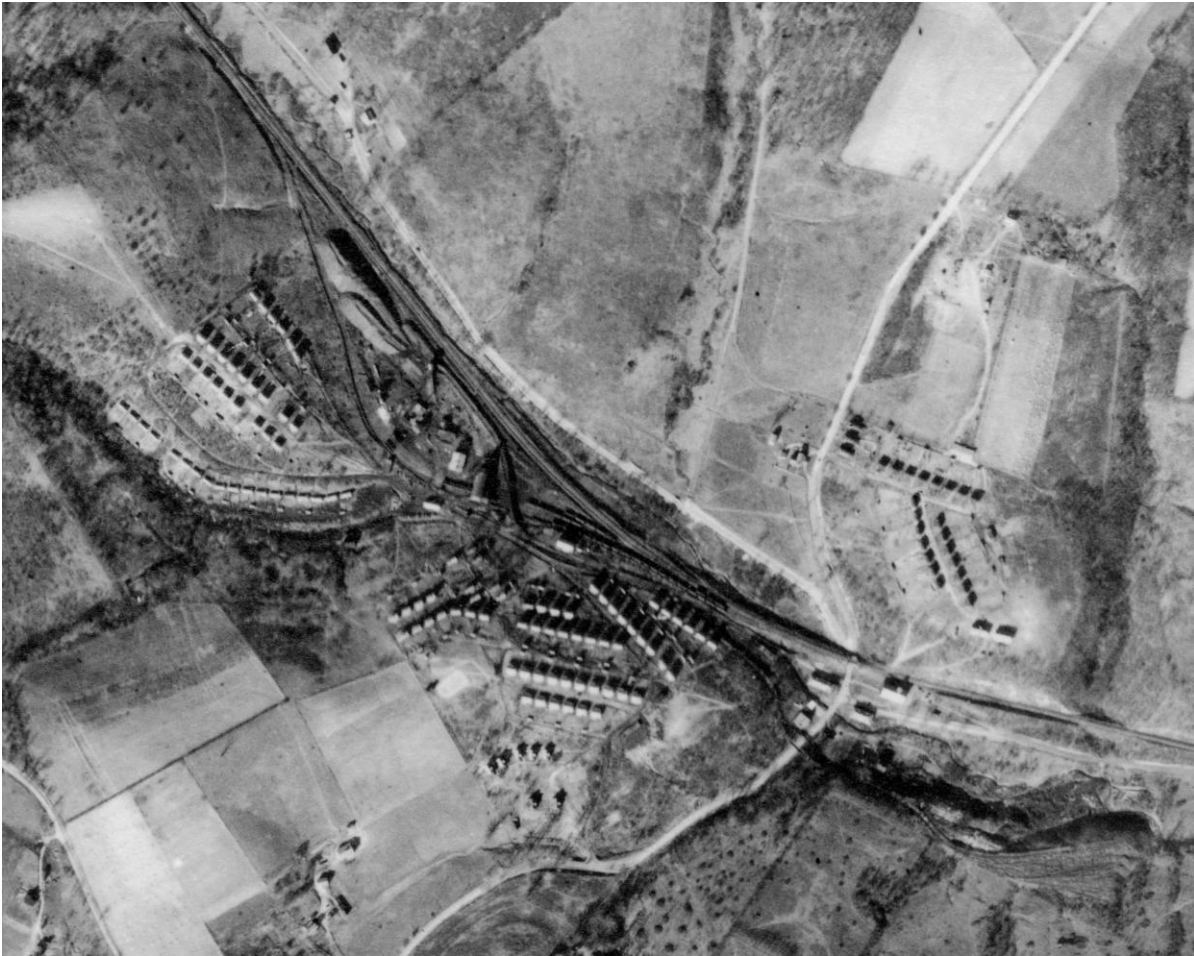


Another photo of the Henderson No. 1 Mine shows only a single smokestack on the power house, indicating that the mine had only recently opened and was still in the development stage. The two boxcars also indicate that supplies were still being brought into the mine. The village of Hendersonville is visible in the background.

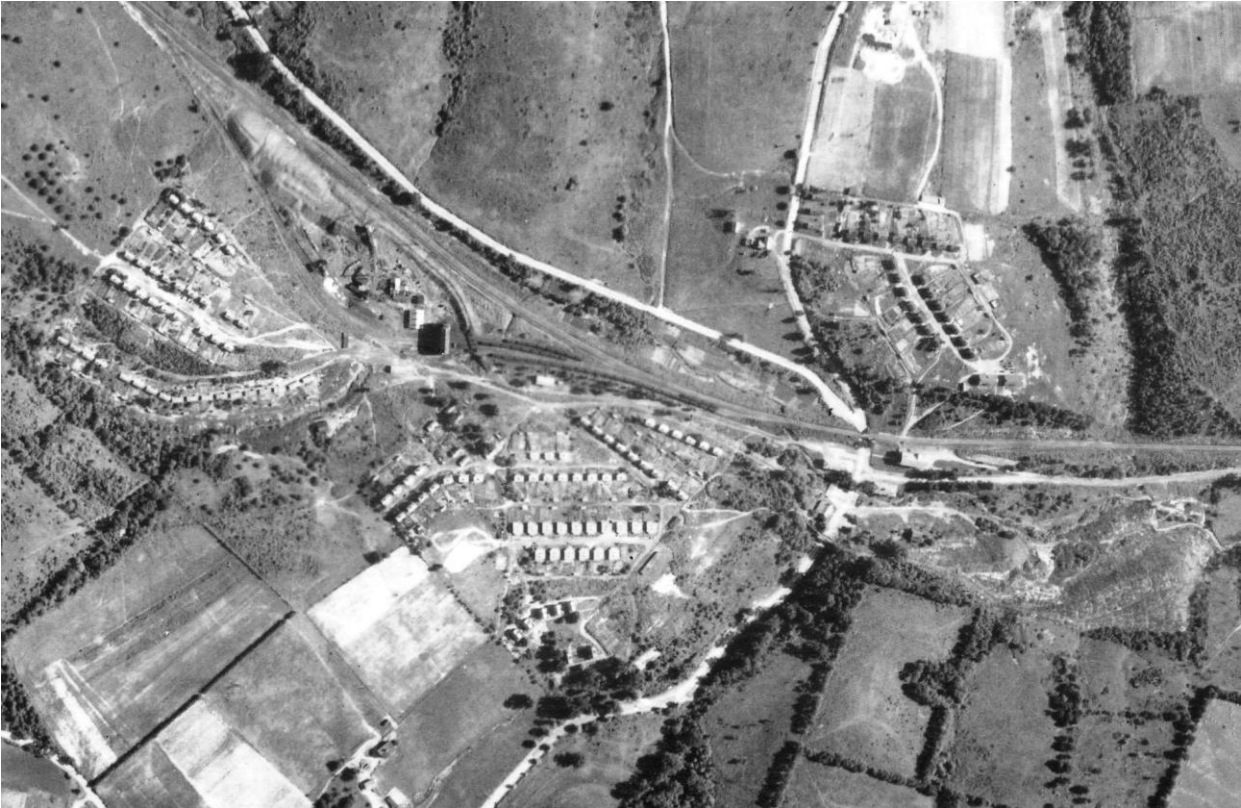




This 1938 aerial photo shows evidence of a mine that has been operating for more than 20 years. The two waste piles on the northwest side of the tipple are no longer being used and waste is being dumped at the new waste pile on the other side of Morganza Road, which required the mine to build a trestle across the road for the waste larry.



One year later and the waste dump has gotten larger, the loaded yard is full of cars and the empty yard is empty.





This 1957 photo shows all the evidence that the mine has been closed and abandoned. The tippie is gone and the yard tracks are removed.



By 1958, the siding into the mine is returning to Nature, as evidenced by the vegetation growing down the center of the old siding.





By 1967, hardly anything remains of the mine except for the waste dumps, and Hendersonville has all the marks of a well-established community.

