

Sunnyhill, Maraca and Rider Mines (Bob Ciminell ©2012)

The Sunnyhill, Maraca and Rider mines were strip mines located between North Star and Champion, the majority of the strip mines in this area shipped by truck; however, there is a possibility that some may have used the cleaning plant at the Solar Mine to process their coal and ship via the Montour. The cleaning plant at Solar had a Rheolaveur washing plant, dustless shaker screens, magnets for removing tramp metal, picking tables and loading booms.

Sunnyhill was owned by the Sunnyhill Coal Company, an affiliate of the Sunnyhill Mining Company of West Virginia. Sunnyhill went by various names during its lifetime, including Sunnyhill No. 3 Strip and Sunnyhill No. 5. The Sunnyhill Mine had 42 employees in 1943. The mine produced 15,996 tons of coal in 1943, 661,000 tons in 1944 and 638,000 tons in 1945. The tippie had a coal crusher, shaker screens, a picking table and loading booms. In 1947 the mine used two stripping shovels, two loading shovels, three draglines, two bulldozers, four coal drills and 20 coal trucks to bring coal to the tippie.

In 1944, the Maraca Mine produced 48,246 tons of coal that was all shipped by rail. Maraca was owned by the Mayer Coal Company that year, operated for 290 days and had 9 employees. (This could indicate that the company used a lot of contractors.) A 1943 newspaper article referred to the Maraca Mine as the "Marasco Mine" and said it was "across the road" (Potato Garden Run Road?) from the Sunnyhill Mine. There are no records of a Maraca Mine, which may indicate that the mine operated under different names and owners throughout its lifetime.

The Rider No. 4 Mine operated in 1953 and produced 146,000 tons of coal. It had a coal crusher, shakers, a picking table and heavy media washer. Equipment included four shovels, one dragline and three bulldozers. In 1947, the Rider Mine was owned by the William Aloe Coal Company. Production was 380,000 tons in 1945 and 391,000 tons in 1946.

Given the tremendous amount of strip mining that occurred in the area west of Imperial and north of Champion from the late 1930s into the early 1960s it is more than likely that the same mines operated under different ownership and names over the period. In all likelihood, the Rider Mine used the old Boggs Mine tippie to process its coal.

Sunnyhill, Maraca and Rider are included in these series of articles because they were listed on the Montour Railroad timetables between 1947 and 1968 and some shipped coal on the Montour.

The illustrations below are calculated guesses as to where these mines were located on the Montour.

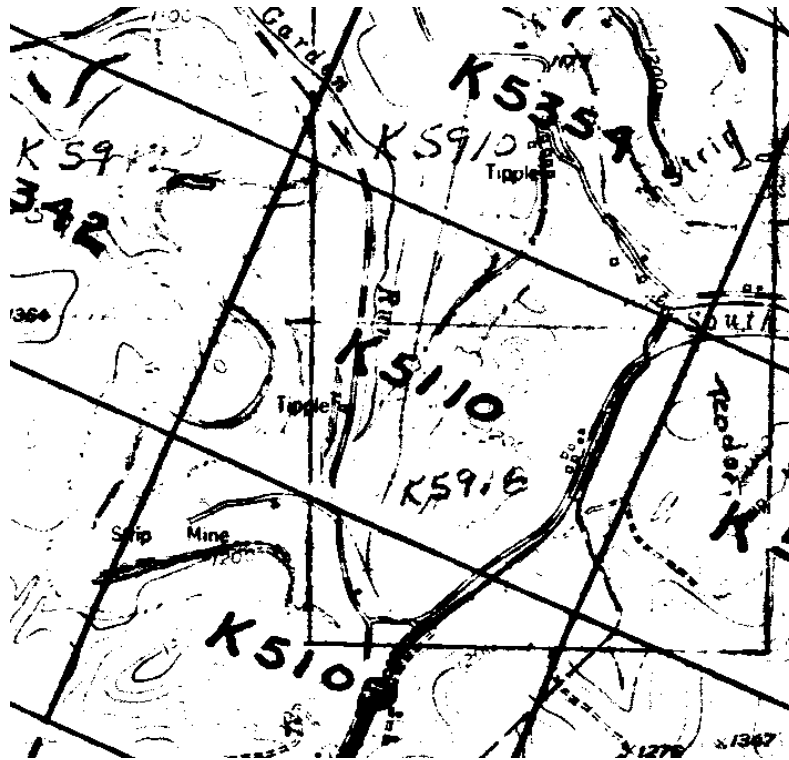
This 2010 Google Earth image shows the area where the Sunnyhill, Maraca and Rider mines were located, as best as we can determine.



This 1930s WPA map shows the deep mines operating in the Pittsburgh seam west of Imperial. The Partridge, Solar and Boggs mines are shown. The heavy black contour line indicates where the coal seam outcrops at the surface and these were the areas that were stripped by the Sunnyhill, Maraca and Rider mines, along with the remaining coal in the northern end of the Partridge Mine that was stripped by Russell No. 2.



This excerpt from a Consolidation Coal mine map shows three tipples in the area of the Sunnyhill, Maraca and Rider mines. The tipple at K5354 was for the Russell No. 2 Mine, and the one at K5110 was possible the Sunnyhill or Maraca tipple. The Strip Mine at K5105 was the Solar Mine.



The Montour timetable indicates that the Maraca Mine was serviced off of the Boggs Mine Siding, suggesting the spur ran to the left of the long string of hopper cars in Boggs Yard visible in this 1956 aerial photo. The first spur goes into Boggs Mine, but the second one curving around the copse of trees north of Boggs may have been the Maraca Mine.

