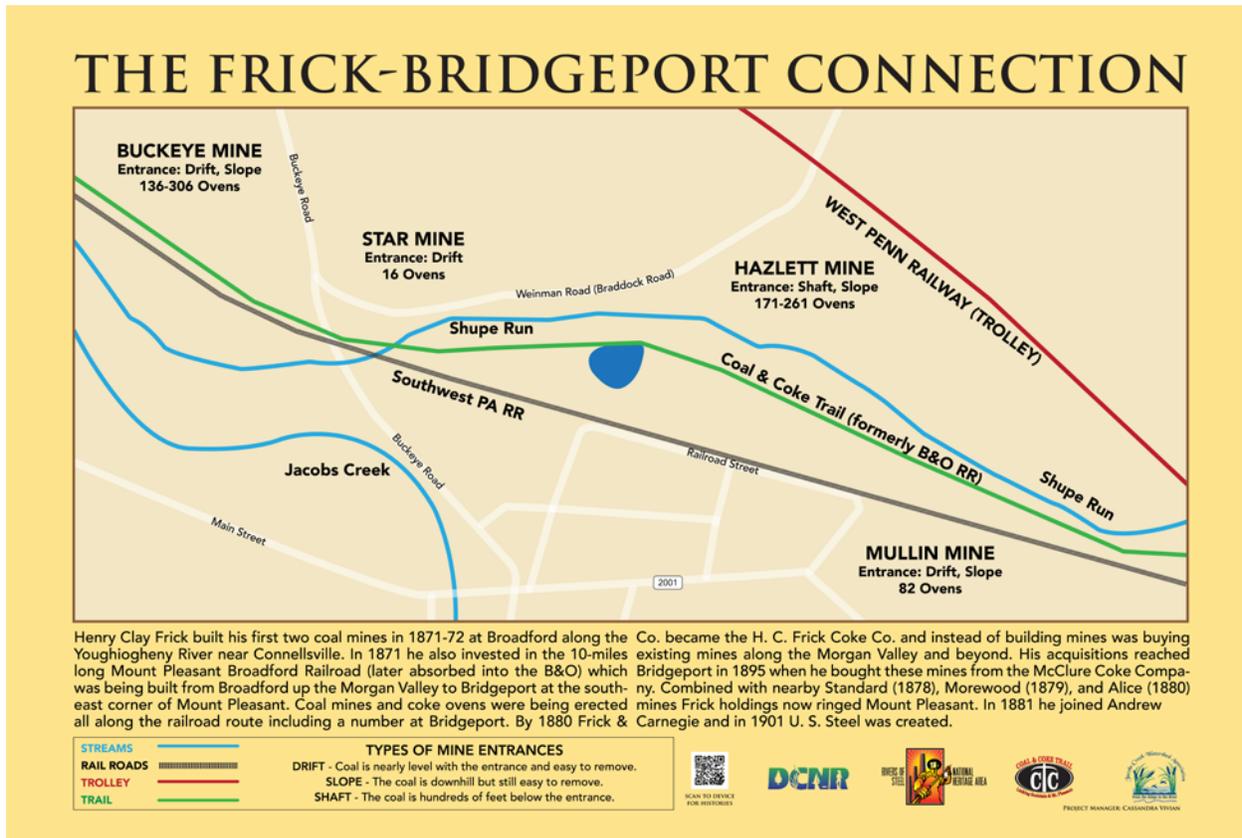
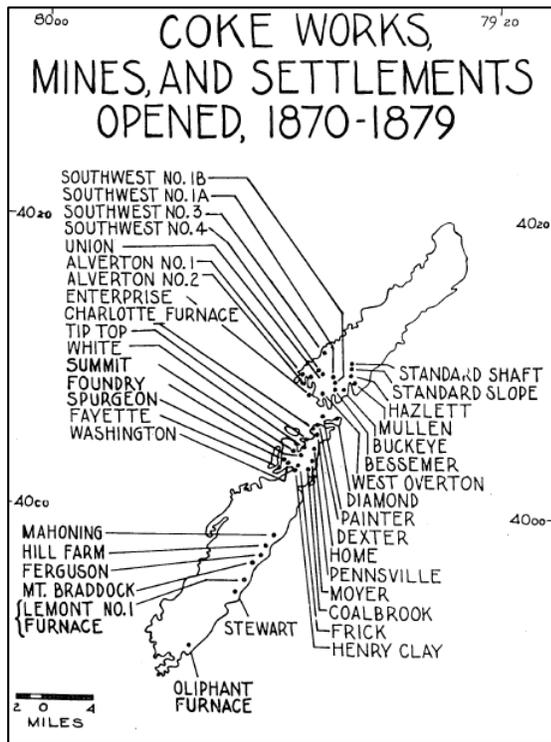


# Coal Mine and Coke Oven Reclamation and Preservation Project: Phase I Jacobs Creek Watershed Association



**Project Director: Cassandra Vivian**  
**Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area**  
**Pennsylvania Dept of Conservation and Natural Resources**

The original intent of this project was to research the early coal mines and coke ovens of the H. C. Frick Coke Company in the Bridgeport area. As work progressed it became apparent that the



Note no Star or Stauffer. See footnote 1.

mines in question had an earlier history worth recording. None of these mines, as you will see, was built by Frick. They were all purchased and remained part of the Frick holdings until they were closed or sold to small scale operators. The mines are still there. The coal is still there. Some of the beehive coke ovens remain in various stages of decay hidden behind years of overgrowth.

By the end of the 1860s the great coal and coke bonanza had begun. It was a speculative venture throughout Pennsylvania as the great Industrial Revolution had emerged in the United States. Anyone who had coal on their land or could purchase land with coal in it tried to get into the business of mining and coking coal.

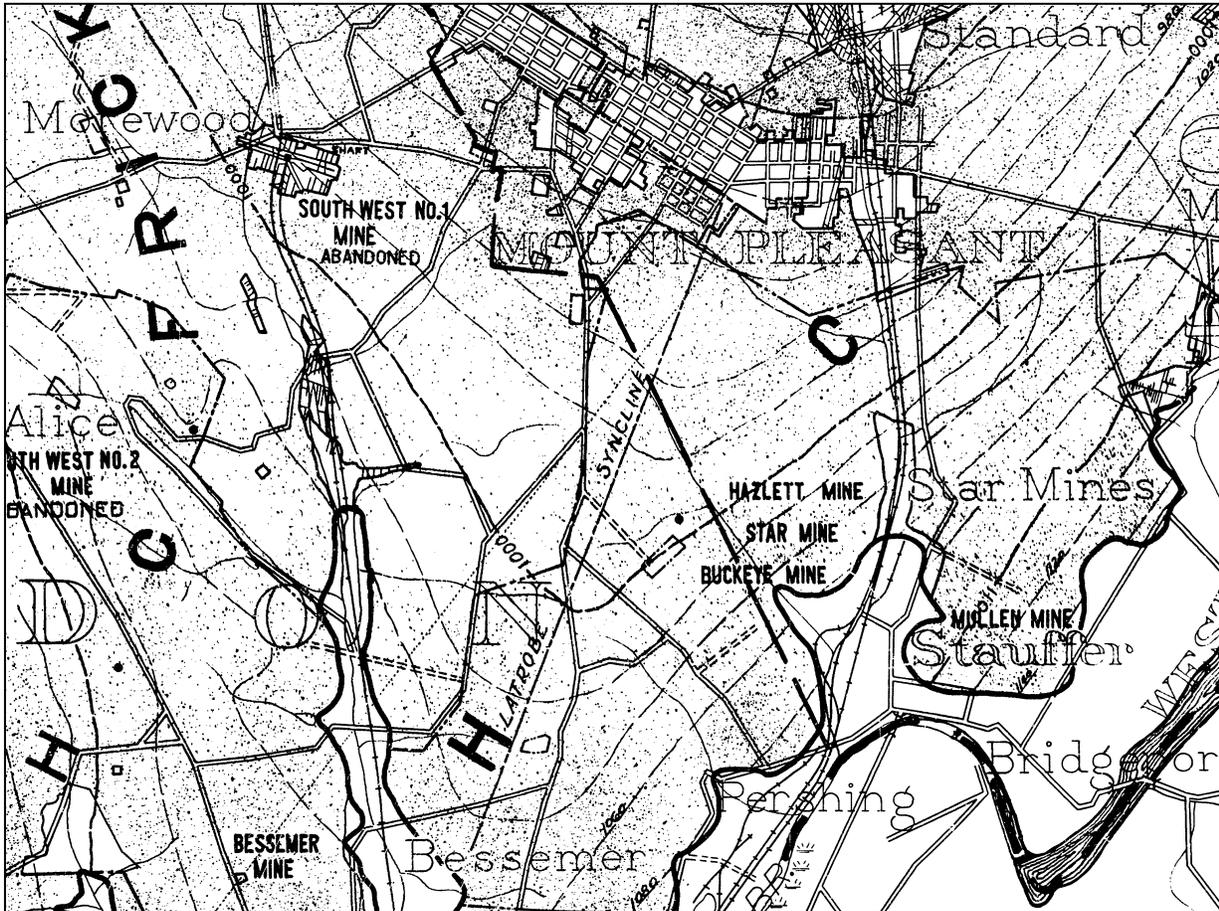
Henry Clay Frick was one of those speculators. Born in the region, he built his first two coal mines in 1871-72 at Broad Ford (Broadford) along the Youghiogheny River near his grandfather Overholt's distillery. In 1871 he also invested in the 10-miles long Mount Pleasant Broadford Railroad (later absorbed into the B&O)

which was being built from Broad Ford up the Morgan Valley to Bridgeport at the southeast corner of Mount Pleasant (population 717 in 1871). Coal mines and coke ovens were being erected all along the railroad route including a number in Bridgeport.<sup>1</sup>

When the financial panic of 1873 hit the nation many of the speculators were out of business. Frick could have been among them but he used his grandfather's contacts and floated a loan from the Mellon family to save his mines. Further, he began to buy out others who were not as fortunate as he. Moving north along the Morgan Valley he slowly bought Rist, Morgan, Foundry, White, Eagle, Summit, and Tip Top mines.

By 1880 Frick & Co. became the H. C. Frick Coke Co. Its acquisitions reached Bridgeport in 1895 when Frick bought all the mines from the McClure Coke Company including: Buckeye, Star, Hazlett, and Mullin. Combined with nearby Standard, Morewood, Bessemer, and Alice mines, Frick holdings now ringed the region where he grew up and went to school. In 1881 he joined Andrew Carnegie at Carnegie Steel and in 1901 U. S. Steel was created.

<sup>1</sup> The illustration is from John Aubrey Enman, *The Relationship of Coal Mining and Coke Making to the Distribution of Population Agglomerations in the Connellsville (Pennsylvania) Beehive Coke Region*, Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Library, 1963, p. 142.



Portion of the WPA map of Connellsville, sheet 6, of the Pittsburgh Seam. These maps were made by unemployed artists during the Depression in the 1930s. Unemployed miners sealed mines to stop acid mine drainage, etc. (Courtesy of the PA Department of Environmental Protection – California District Office.) Considered factually poor.

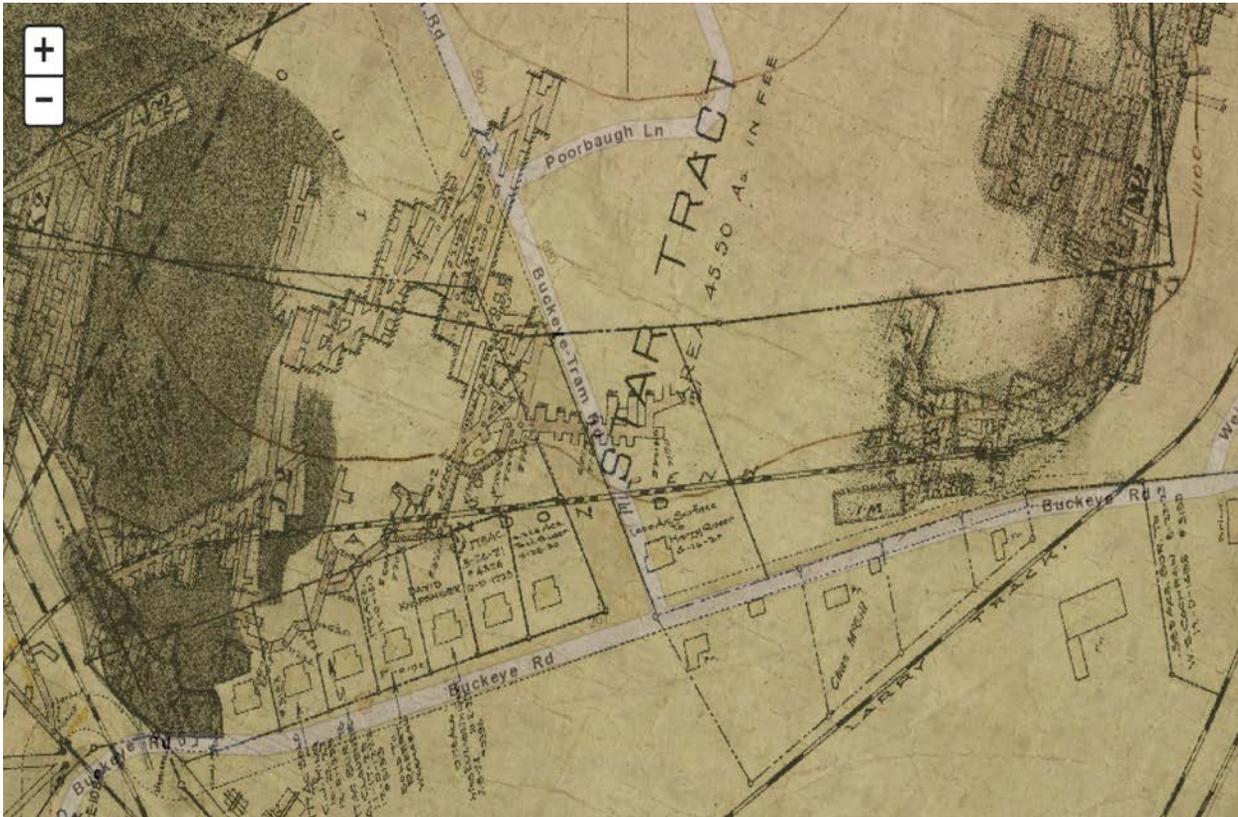
Buckeye, Star, Hazlett, and Mullin, the mines in this discussion, needed two things: water to quench the coke after firing and transport to move the coke to market. These mines sat along the short stream called Shupe Run. It in turn flowed into Jacobs Creek which flowed into the Youghiogheny.

The mines were serviced by the Mount Pleasant Broadford Railroad. That railroad had been leased to the Pittsburgh & Connellsville Railroad in 1872 and the pair had been absorbed by the Baltimore and Ohio several years later. Not to be outdone, the Pennsylvania Railroad serviced some of the other mines in the area.

The same men who were speculating on coal and coke organized and bought shares in the railroads and oversaw their development and expansion. That included Frick. They also established water companies and built roads, both necessary for the mines they owned. It was Frick who dammed Jacobs Creek and established the Mount Pleasant Water Company.

So the development of the region was based on the needs of the industry. It needed transport and built roads and railroads. It needed workers and imported men. They needed housing so the companies built villages. The workers and their families needed food and necessities so the companies established stores within the towns.

## BUCKEYE MINE



The RGG5\_UMM\_100\_000B\_Buckeye map has been superimposed over a general street map showing the location of the under and above ground structures at part of Buckeye Mine.<sup>2</sup> The mine map is approximately 100 years old. The street map is today.

The Buckeye Mine was built by the Cochran & Ewing Company in 1872-73.<sup>3</sup> The Cochran family came to the United States from Ireland in the 1700s. Mordecai Cochran was one of the early pioneers in the coke industry and as early as 1843 mined coal on his land, turned it into coke, loaded it on a boat he built, and tried to sell it to businesses along the Ohio River. His nephew James Cochran joined him on the river and they sold the first coke for money in Cincinnati in 1843. Although James Cochran owned several mines in the region he did not own Buckeye. It was owned by J. M. Cochran (John) and a local speculator named John K. Ewing. Both men had additional coal investments.

<sup>2</sup> H. C. Frick Coke Company, *RGG5 Mine Map, Sheet 000B Buckeye* [map], 1910. 1:1200, "RGG5 Mine Map Collection," Posted: 5 December 2012, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection and Penn State University's Pennsylvania Mine Map Atlas.

[ftp://data1.commons.psu.edu/pub/minemaps/Map\\_Repository/Other\\_Collections/RGG5\\_Collection/Archive\\_TIF/Images/RGG5\\_UMM\\_100\\_000C\\_Mullin\\_Standard.zip](ftp://data1.commons.psu.edu/pub/minemaps/Map_Repository/Other_Collections/RGG5_Collection/Archive_TIF/Images/RGG5_UMM_100_000C_Mullin_Standard.zip) (23 March 2015).

<sup>3</sup> *Annual Report of the Secretary of Internal Affairs of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Part III Industrial Statistics*, vol. V, 1876-7, Harrisburg: Land S. Hart, 1878, p. 250 and *Historical Data H. C. Frick Coke Company's Plants*, H. C. Frick Coke Co. The former lists 1873 as the opening and the latter lists 1872. Several secondary sources give different dates for the founding of these mines including 1871. After investigating through a dozen sources as outlined above and finding nothing, I have concluded these two sources and the Platt report (see next footnote), all rare, primary sources, are probably the accurate ones. I could not find any place where mines had to be registered.

Buckeye began as a small mine on the west bank of Shupe Run. As the industry grew so did Buckeye. It operated with two entrances: a drift and a slope. The entrance to a mine is determined by the level of the coal seam to be mined. In the Connellsville Coke District the Pittsburgh Seam was mined. It was considered to be among the best coal resources in the world and on the average was 9 feet high. The seam itself was found at different levels depending on the terrain. If the seam was near the surface and one could walk into the mine and bring the coal out with little effort, the entrance was called a drift. If the seam was a little deeper but the coal could still be hauled out easily, it was called a slope entrance. However, if the seam was hundreds of feet below the surface, a shaft had to be dug and an elevator system used. That was called a shaft mine. It must be noted that the Pittsburgh Seam was created 300 million years ago.

In 1875 the *Second Geological Survey of Pennsylvania of 1875 Special Report* reported 60 beehive bank ovens of 10.5'x5' in size existed at Buckeye Mine. Each required 100 bushels of coal for each firing and were fired for either 48 hours or 72 hours depending on the use of the coke. They filled 38 railroad cars weekly and the coke was shipped west. Only 36 men handled the work.<sup>4</sup>

All of the mines in the region worked when they had orders. There were times when they operated at full force and all the coke ovens were working, and there were times when only half of the ovens were in operation. The same was true with the work force. If there were orders men worked, if no orders they had no work. That meant no pay. Even the pay fluctuated by demand. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century miners were paid by the wagon load and in poor times they would get around 20 cents a load, but in better times they would be paid as much as 33 cents a load. Reports indicate that in 1882, along with the Star Mine nearby, Buckeye employed 110 men and had 136 beehive coke ovens.<sup>5</sup> That was a good year. But in 1885 only 47 employees were working.<sup>6</sup> That was a bad year when demand for coke was low.

By 1886 J. M. Cochran had died and A. C. Cochran had become his executor. The name of the company was changed to A. C. Cochran Coal & Coke Company and employed 48 miners and 54 coke workers, with 122 beehive coke ovens working.<sup>7</sup> That company did not last long as it, along with the other three mines in our discussion, was purchased by the McClure Coke Company on July 1, 1890.<sup>8</sup> Like the H. C. Frick Coke Company, McClure was buying up mine properties. With this purchase McClure was second only to Frick in size.

As early as the 1860s the state of Pennsylvania established a department to observe and control the fast expanding mining industry. They established inspectors who would visit mines

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<sup>4</sup>Franklin Platt, *Second Geological Survey of Pennsylvania 1875 Special Report of the Coke Manufacture of the Youghiogheny River Valley in Fayette and Westmoreland County*, Harrisburg: Board of Commissioners, 1876, p. 54.

<sup>5</sup> "The Works at Bridgeport: Description of the Mullen, Boyle, Buckeye, and Star Mines, *Connellsville Courier*, March 24 1882, p. 1.

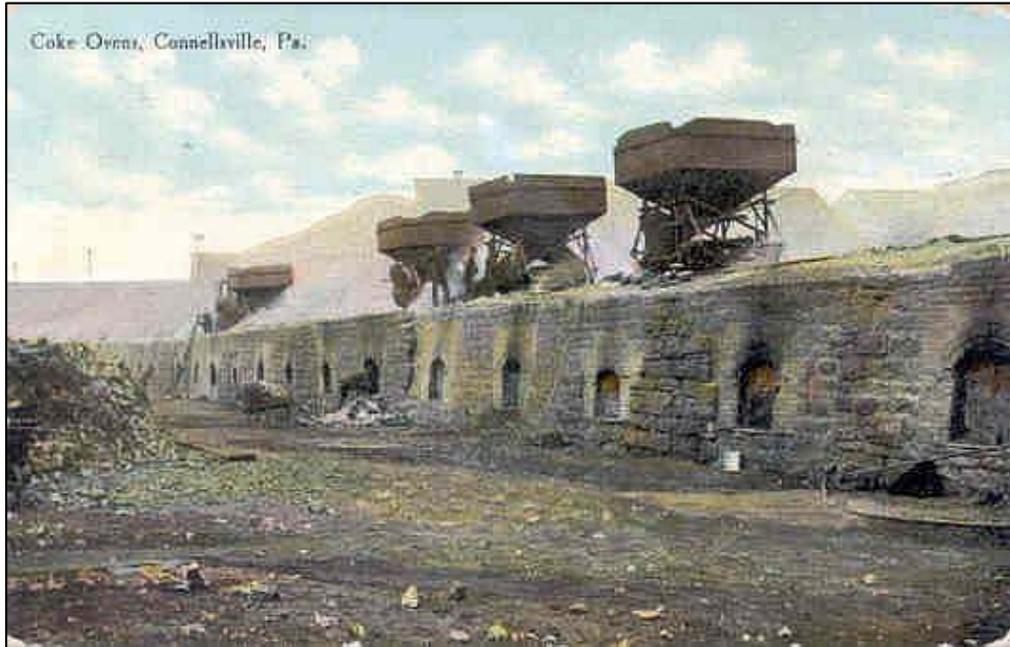
<sup>6</sup> "Reports of the Mine Inspectors of the Bituminous Coal Fields," Legislative Document No. 6, First, Second, and Fifth districts in *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Internal Affairs of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, Part III, Industrial Statistics, 1885, Vol. XIII, 1886, 1b- 308b, 41b.

<sup>7</sup> Edward K. Muller, *et.al. Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic American Buildings Survey/ Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER)*, America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Washington D. C.: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1994, p. 40.

<sup>8</sup> "Trade Growing Slacker," *Connellsville Courier*, July 11, 1890, p. 2.

on a regular basis and issues reports.<sup>9</sup> They would check for safety features, ventilation, and report on the number of coke ovens and workers. In 1890 the report found ventilation in the Buckeye mine poor.

McClure kept the regional mines for only a short time and in 1895 sold all of its holdings in our area to the H. C. Frick Coke Company. Under Frick 248 men and boys were employed



with 160 beehive ovens.<sup>10</sup> (Perhaps leased to McClure till 1900.) By 1905 Frick had increased the coke ovens at Buckeye to 306. Although by this time there were new types of coke ovens being made, Frick stuck to

the beehive coke oven. In later years his decision would prove to be a problem for the region.

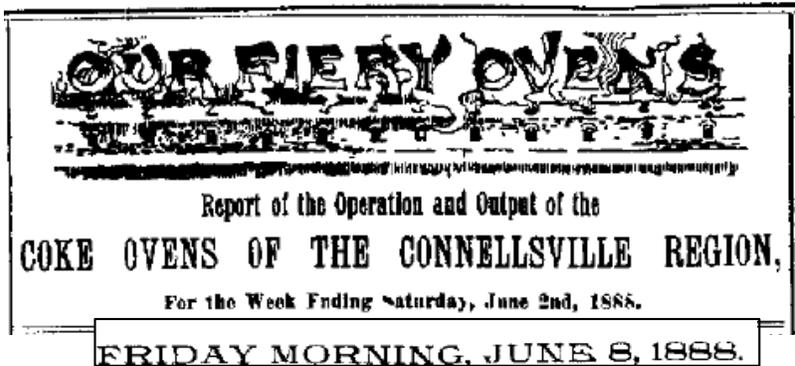
Frick continued to invest in Buckeye. By 1910 he had expanded the larry car system to run from the Buckeye coke ovens via the Star Mine coke ovens to the Hazlett Mine coke ovens, a distance of nearly two miles. The larry car was an important component of the coking process. When the coal wagon exited the mine its contents were measured and then dumped into a larry car that sat on tracks. A small engine pulled the larry cars atop the coke ovens when each car would dump its measured contents into a coke oven. (see illustration) By expanding the tracks of the cars, Frick enabled the coal from the Buckeye Mine to feed the coke ovens from Star and Hazlett too.

The big coal operators had to fill big orders. When a mine reached a point where its coal reserves were limited it became a liability. By 1915 only 125 men were working at Buckeye. In 1917 it was closed all together. However World War I changed things in the coal fields. Mines that had been closed were reopened to meet the demand for coal, coke, and steel. 300 coke ovens were operating at Buckeye in 1918.

<sup>9</sup> These reports can be found at: <http://www.coalmininghistorypa.org>. After the Mammoth Mine disaster of 1891 the H. C. Frick Coke Company established a safety program for all of its mines (which became the industry standard) and created its own inspection system.

<sup>10</sup> HABS/HAER, p. 40.

When the Connellsville Coke Region began to boom the *Connellsville Courier* became the unofficial reporter of all things coal and coke. On June 8, 1888 it began a column called the *Report of the Operation and Output of the Coke Ovens of the Connellsville Region*. (see illustration) The chart recorded the name of the mine, the operator, the number of ovens, the number of working ovens, the number not working, number of days the mine was working in a week, and the tonnage output in a week. It was quite comprehensive. Buckeye remained on the list through most of 1920 under the ownership of the H. C. Frick Coke Co.



Today little remains of the Buckeye Mine. There is one patch house, another home that some say was the Superintendent's home while others say was a bakery, a string of coke ovens sometimes visible from the Coal & Coke Trail, and a gob pile (slag dump).

**STAR MINE**



*Caption: Once again using the RGG5\_UMM\_100\_000B\_Buckeye map and superimposing a modern road map we see the layout of the Star Coke ovens in relation to the railroad (now the Coal & Coke Trail) and the current houses to the left of Weinman Road while the Star patch houses were to the right of the road.*

The Star Mine began small, struggled, and eventually was absorbed into the surrounding mines. Even its origin is difficult to trace. Most sources maintain that it was built by a local man named B. F. Coughanour in 1871. But other sources maintain that the Star and the Stauffer Mine were one and the same. Although it never appeared on the *Report of the Operation and Output of the Coke Ovens of the Connellsville Region* (neither did the Star), the Stauffer Mine was a legitimate small operation at Bridgeport which some reports say had only 12 (one source says 20) beehive ovens and was worked by 12 men. It probably opened sometime in the early 1870s after 1871, was owned and operated by the J. F. Stauffer & Co (Some sources say J.R. Stouffer), which had two other nearby mines which *were* on the Connellsville mine list. Obviously more research is needed to solve these discrepancies, but the trusted *Second Geological Survey of Pennsylvania 1875 Special Report of 1876* gave Stauffer 20 Beehive Bank Ovens<sup>11</sup> at 11.5' X 6' in size which each took three or four wagons to charge and made 13 railcars or 8,125 bushels of coal weekly. It maintained 12 men worked there and the coal was shipped to the west.<sup>12</sup> Regardless of the discrepancies of the reports, the Star was a mine at Bridgeport and by 1878 it had been absorbed and portions abandoned.

Local residents remember that the Star had one drift entrance located to the left of Weinman Road. Its tipple practically spanned the road, and its beehive coke ovens ran north along Shupe Run. Its few patch houses were further up Weinman across Shupe Run on the east bank. It is also listed as having 16 beehive coke ovens. Both the mine and its coke ovens were joined to Buckeye in 1882 by Cochran & Ewing Co.<sup>13</sup> Like the other mines in our study it transitioned into the A. C. Cochran Coal & Coke Company in 1886, and was sold to McClure Coke Co in the 1890s.

Mines needed workers. The region did not have enough of them, so slowly, very slowly, immigrants began to migrate to the region. The first immigrants to work in the mines were German, Irish, English, and Scotch. They mostly spoke English and their traditions were similar to earlier colonial Americans. According to Thomas Lynch, Frick's right hand man, the first immigrants from central and southern Europe came to our region in 1870 and were sent to Morewood by the H. C. Frick Company.<sup>14</sup> This is arguable. In the Bridgeport area Gilbert Rafferty of the Hazlett Mine ordered two car loads of "Slavs" which arrived on the Mount Pleasant and Broadford Railroad in late October of 1883.<sup>15</sup> By that year Slovaks, Magyars, Poles, Croatians, and Italians joined the ever growing number of immigrants. By 1890 one fourth of the employees in the Connellsville Coke Region were from southern and eastern Europe.<sup>16</sup> By then they also included people from other regions: Hungarians, Russians, Ruthenians, Roumanians, Syrians, Armenians, and Serbians.

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<sup>11</sup> Beehive ovens were laid out in two methods: bank ovens, a long row tucked into the side of a hill, and block ovens, where two rows of ovens stood back to back. They would also be separated into merchant ovens, making coke for general use including foundries, and furnace ovens, making coke exclusively for blast furnaces in steel mills. Each required a different firing. As time went on there were rectangular ovens, where the coke was pushed through the oven by machine, and eventually retort and By-Product ovens, which captured the gases and other substances emitted into the air. The latter killed the beehive coke oven and helped bring an end to the Connellsville Coke Region which had clung to the beehive and did not modernize.

<sup>12</sup> Platt, p. 54.

<sup>13</sup> "Industrial Items," *Miner's Record*, 1882, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> "The Harrowing Hun," *Connellsville Weekly Courier*, Jan 29, 1886, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> "Coal and Coke," *Mount Pleasant Journal*, October 24, 1883, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Jeff Lauck, "The Bituminous Coal Miner and Coke Worker of Western Pennsylvania," *The Survey*, Vol. XXVI, April 1891 to September 1891, April 1, 1911, p. 35.

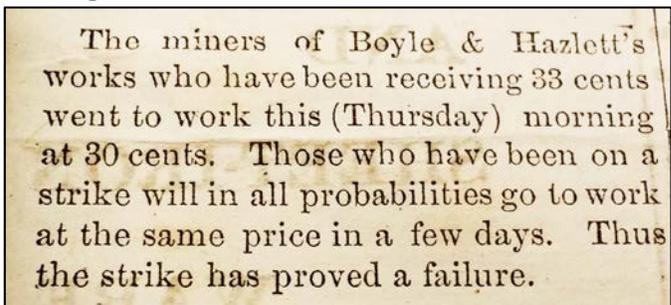
It wasn't easy. None spoke English. "They would be routed out in a bunch every morning, taken to the yards and shown by motions what they were expected to do."<sup>17</sup> By 1884 the resentment by earlier immigrants was so intense "An Appeal to American Working Men" was posted in the *Scottsdale Independent* newspaper June 18, 1884. It read:

"American labor must be protected. There is a certain class of European Serfs amongst us, who are called Hungarians who are a curse to our Country and a disgrace to the civilized world. Wherever they are found these creatures live on the lowest kind of food, therefore they take away our labor, never becoming citizens, never invest their earnings in any way to make their homes here, but instead they send their earnings back to their native land, and thus make a continual drain on our country's money. Now we appeal to all American citizens to give us a helping hand, and protect us from this degrading evil." Signed Workingmen<sup>18</sup>

In 1885 the *Scottsdale Independent* lamented, "Foreign labors are being shipped to this region by the car load. On last Wednesday, a car load arrived; on Saturday, two car loads; and Monday morning one car load; in all between two and three persons [sic]. They are mostly composed of the lowest class of Hungarians, Sweeds, Poles, and Italians. These people can live on almost anything eatable. They have been known to eat carrion and the refuse of hog pens. They will be sent to the different coke works in this vicinity and put to such work as they know nothing about, . . ."<sup>19</sup>

The ethnic resentment was so bad that the Austro-Hungarian consul in Pittsburgh, Consul Schamberg, came to the district to see what was happening to his people and to try to find a solution to the many problems they faced: low wages, poor working conditions, and above all ethnic intimidation. It took decades for the foreigners to be assimilated into life in America. Today immigrants face the same problems.

All of these immigrants from both the first and second wave lived through some of the most difficult times in industrial history. They suffered strikes in 1875, 1881 (a month), 1886, 1887, 1891, 1894, 1897, and beyond. The issue was always the same: pay and conditions. The price of coke was determined by the market place. When there was a glut on the market the mines closed some of their ovens and laid off some of their men. They also dropped the price on a wagon load of coal. At the lowest it ran around 20 cents a load and at its best during this



The miners of Boyle & Hazlett's works who have been receiving 33 cents went to work this (Thursday) morning at 30 cents. Those who have been on a strike will in all probabilities go to work at the same price in a few days. Thus the strike has proved a failure.

1875. Mount Pleasant Dawn.

era 33 cents a load. The miners wanted some type of security: a steady income they could count on and a home they would not lose. The mine owners tried to group together to form a united front against the workers but also to fix the price of coke to buyers. It wasn't easy as they were competitors and some small owners refused to join what was to be called the Coke Syndicate (suggested and

run by Henry Clay Frick). The workers needed to organize too but there were several unions vying for their vote and they only confused the issue. It was chaos.

<sup>17</sup> "The Slav Invasion," *The Weekly Courier*, Special Edition, May 1914, p. 13.

<sup>18</sup> "An Appeal to American Working Men," *Scottsdale Independent*, June 18, 1884.

<sup>19</sup> "Foreign Laborers," *Scottsdale Independent*, December 12, 1885, p. 1.

From the first strike to the last the men and boys of the Bridgeport area were involved. When they tried for better wages in 1875 The *Mount Pleasant Dawn* reported, "Boyle and Hazlet [sic] offered their men 33 cents per wagon, if they would work on Wednesday. . ." and the owners of the Bessemer Mine nearby stated: "We will positively not pay more than 30 cents per wagon for mining, and, unless our men go to work before we lose some of our contracts, we will then pay only such prices, and run so much of our works as may be convenient." Signed: Sherrick & Markle.<sup>20</sup>



*Caption: Local miners and their families marching through the streets of Mount Pleasant during the strike of 1886, Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, Feb, 6, 1886, p. 408.*

In 1886 the coke ovens got bigger, the company stores were overcharging, and the men wanted an increase in wages. The regional men were described in a headline of the *Scottdale* paper as "Fiery Huns, Furious Bohemians, and Frantic Poles Carry Terror Throughout the Coke Region."<sup>21</sup> 10,000 men were affected and again the strike lasted about a month.

A year later in July of 1887 the men were out again in a strike affecting 13,000 men. There were rumors of eviction that would make 6, 000 people homeless. But the people of Bridgeport seem to have been calm. The paper reported, "No change in the strike. Everybody peaceable and hoping for the best. Independence Day was celebrated here by the Sunday schools, K of L and M & L AA. Five hundred people participated in the parade and marched to Pershing's grove."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> "A Strike Among the Workers," *Mount Pleasant Dawn*, 1875, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> "Fiery Huns, Furious Bohemians, and Frantic Poles Carry Terror Throughout the Coke Region," *Scottdale Intelligencer*, Jan 23, 1886, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup>"Stauffer," *Scottdale Independent*, July 8, 1887, p. 4.

The H. C. Frick Coke Company was the first to grant concessions to the miners. On August 19, 1887 the Frick miners received a minimum pay scale and were paid semimonthly.<sup>23</sup> The state government passed a law requiring miners be paid every two weeks, so all owners had to comply. Then Frick tentatively agreed to a sliding pay scale. Issues continued until 1891 when the miners, now better organized, attempted to get an 8-hour day and a 15 cent increase in wages. The owners said no and 10,000 men went out on strike on what the Connellsville *Daily Courier Special Bicentennial* edition of 1976 called a “reign of terror.”

The miners began attacking mines. Mine owner W. J. Rainey called in Pinkerton detectives. Frick closed all his mines. Others called in strikebreakers. It lasted for thirteen weeks with little accomplished. By March of 1894 the United Mine Workers had a foothold in the Connellsville Coke Region. A six month new reign of terror began and violence lead to death. By



April it looked as if the miners lost again. They paraded through the towns. The governor tried to stop them. Finally the owners locked the miners out. Rainey brought blacks from southern states. The Slavs who were out were locked out. They never got back. By October the men were beaten. In March of the next year they received a ‘voluntary’ increase in pay from 78 cents to 90 cents.<sup>24</sup>

As for the fate of the Star Mine, its coke ovens continued to operate for some time. Although the name Weinman is used often in this region and there were Weinman mines as early as the 1890s, it is unlikely that the Star became one of the Weinman (sometimes spelled Wienman) mines prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However the property in Bridgeport was heavily worked by the Weinman family and currently belongs to them. They sold their coke to US Steel and continued to mine the area well into the 1950s.

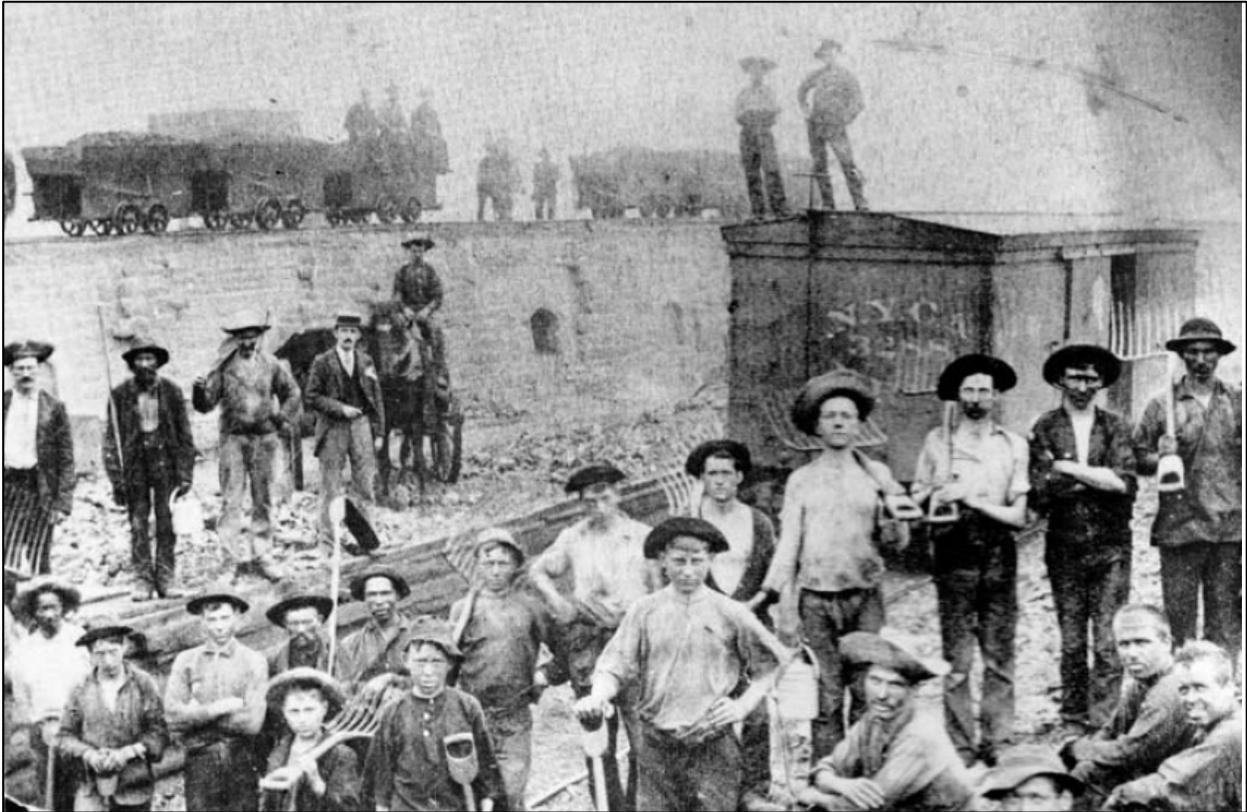
Today the mine is closed yet linked underground to Buckeye, Hazlett, and Standard. They are all flooded. The Star coke ovens are buried. Many of the miners lived in Bridgeport, but there were a few patch houses at Star. Today there remains a single patch house (see photo). It is not habitable because the basement is flooded.

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<sup>23</sup> “Signed At Last: Scale for the Regulation of Wages at H.C. Frick Coke Co’s Works in the Connellsville Coke Region,” *Scottdale Independent*, August 8, 1887, p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> This history of the early strikes was summarized from “The Industrial Wars of the Connellsville Coke Region.” *The Daily Courier Bicentennial Edition*, June 25, 1976, p. D-4.

## HAZLETT MINES (1&2)



*Caption. This photo appears in a book that states it was a Bridgeport Mine in 1863. The earliest known mine in Bridgeport is, as we shall see below, the Myers Mine perhaps created prior to 1870. This may well be the Myers Mine.*

There were two mines with slope entrances named Hazlett on either side of the railroad. Hazlett 1 was built by Boyle & Hazlett on the east side of the railroad in 1873. Hazlett 2 was on the west side and purchased at sheriff's sale. John Myers (Meyers, Moyers) had a company store, 20 buildings, and 100-150 coke ovens at Bridgeport in 1872.<sup>25</sup> They were the first coke ovens in Westmoreland County. (The first mine in Westmoreland County is considered to be the Larimer Mine of the Westmoreland Coal Company of Philadelphia, but coke ovens were not built at Larimer until the late 1870s.)<sup>26</sup> Myers investment of over \$100,000 hit hard times with the Panic of 1873. According to the *Mount Pleasant Dawn*, the Boyle & Hazlett Coal Co. bought the Myers property with the ovens, store, and buildings in 1875 at Sheriff's sale held by the First National Bank for \$33,050.<sup>27</sup>

John D. Boyle and Samuel Hazlett were speculators from Washington, PA who are often credited with building the first coke ovens in Westmoreland County, but as we can see from the *Dawn* article the accolades are not warranted. As further evidence that Myers deserves the credit, a hospital stay in 1905 was reported in the *Connellsville Weekly Courier* under the title *A Coke Pioneer: John Myers Who Built First Ovens in Westmoreland*.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *Annual Report*, 1878, p. 250.

<sup>26</sup> HABS/HAER, p. 168.

<sup>27</sup> "Coke Works Sold," *Mount Pleasant Dawn*, April 15, 1875, p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> "A Coke Pioneer: John Myers Who Built First Ovens in Westmoreland," *The Weekly Courier*, July 20, 1905, p. 6.

Boyle was a Fayette County young man who with his brother Judge Charles E. Boyle owned the newspaper *Genius of Liberty* in Uniontown. He moved to Washington, became its mayor, and then became a coal speculator. Samuel Hazlett was a banker in Washington.<sup>29</sup>

By 1876 Hazlett was the largest mine at Bridgeport with 171 beehive coke ovens, and 125 men mining the coal or preparing the coke. Their labors filled 20 rail cars a day.<sup>30</sup> But the owners were ruthless and much of the antagonism against Henry Clay Frick should go to men like Boyle and Hazlett. The 1876 *Mount Pleasant Dawn* reported, "All the miners in this section of 'cokedom' who were out on a strike last week have gone to work at 25 cents per wagon, the price paid before the strike. Messrs Boyle & Hazlett compelled their men to dig four wagons free to recompense them for the expense incurred by the strike."<sup>31</sup>

In the Panic of 1873, in order to save his business, H. C. Frick cleverly created his own script to be used by miners at his store so his hard currency could keep all his interests afloat. Boyle and Hazlett followed suit. As one can see by the tables below, Frick's Union Supply Stores were competitive on the market with other outlets. Frick encouraged his miners to plant gardens and he bought produce from them to sell. Other owners were not as honorable.

PRICE LIST OF GOODS SOLD AT THE VALLEY STORE (H.C. FRICK & CO.) COMPARED TO OTHER STORES.				
ARTICLES	HCFRICK VALLEY	EH REID SCOTTDALE	FRISBEE CONNELLS	W.&J. Beeson UNIONTOWN
Hams, per lb	\$0.13	\$0.12.5	\$0.12	\$0.12
Sides, per lb	.11	.10	.10	.12.5
Shoulders per lb	.09	.10	.10	.10
Flour per 50 lb	1.75	1.80	1.70-80	1.60
Molasses, per gal	.60	.80	.70	.60
Potatoes, per bus	.50	.60	.50	.60
Coffee, per lb	.20-3	.23-5	.20, 23-4	.22
Soap per lb	.04	3 for .25	4 for .25	4 for .25
Tobacco per lb	.40	.40	.40	.50
Tomatoes 21 lb can	.12.5	.12.5	.15	.15
Cheese, per lb	.18	.15	.16	.13
Rice, per lb	.10	.10	.10	.10
Lard, per lb	.12.5	.12.5	.11	.10
Tea, per lb	.50-1.00	.70	.50-1.20	.50-1.00
Sugar, per lb	.11-12.5	.12.5	.09-11	.10-12.5
Miners' oil, per gal	.75	.80	.90	-----

*Legislative Documents, Comprising the Department and Other Reports made to the Senate and House of Representatives of PA . . . , Vol. 4, Bituminous, 1880, Harrisburg: lane s hart, state printer. 1881, p. 199.*

Caption: Thomas Lynch, H. C. Frick Coke Company superintendent answered critics of his company stores overpricing products by providing a comparison of the company store at the Valley works in Morgan Valley to other local stores. See footnote 35 below for citations.

<sup>29</sup> George T. Fleming, *History of Pittsburgh and Environs, from Prehistory to the Beginning of the American Revolution*, Vol III, New York: The American Historical Society, 1922, p. 847. Some reports maintain that it was William Hazlett who owned this mine but in the Dissolution of Partnership published on page 1 of the *Pittsburgh Daily Post* on January 29, 1881 it recorded the dissolution between John D. Boyle and Samuel Hazlett.

<sup>30</sup> HABS/HARE, p. 40.

<sup>31</sup> *Mount Pleasant Dawn*, May 15, 1875, p. 3.

In 1878 a group of reporters including one from the *Pittsburgh Post* were given a tour of coal mines along the Mount Pleasant Broadford Railroad. Among the many wonders they saw were fossils in the Hazlett Mine. The author, J. C., does not tell us which of our Hazlett mines, but his description is of some cataclysmic event probably at the dawn of time. One seldom hears of these wonders and this is worthy of repeating for the remains are still there just below the surface awaiting a good GIS to tell their story. He wrote, "In one place would be patches of small plants like the clover, another, great swaths of rushes or coarse prairie grass stretching across the mine as if they had been cut down at one sweep of the scythe. The large trees seem to have been of pithy nature and something like the palmetto in appearance; the bark does not resemble that on any of the trees which now grow in this locality. The trees have all fallen in one direction, the storm or convulsion which cast them down, came from the northeast, as the trees all lie southwest from their roots. . . ." <sup>32</sup> They are in the Pittsburgh Coal Seam so they must be 302 million years old.

300 mya means the Carboniferous Period of tropical forests in our area. It appears that fossils in a coal mine are not a new discovery as coal is in fact a product of such forests. First the dead plants, void of oxygen, turn into peat which become compressed and therefore heated into coal. But these are our fossils. And they are just below the surface. What would it take to drain the mine, shore up its tunnels, find the fossils, and open it for all to see?

Moving on, 1879 was a good year for the coke industry. Orders for coke came in from across the country. Boyle and Hazlett built 100 more coke ovens and accepted more orders than they could handle. In 1880 they were sued for failing to deliver 11 railroad cars of coke a day to the Missouri Furnace Company of St. Louis. <sup>33</sup> For whatever reason, in 1881 Boyle bought out Hazlett for \$75,000, and within the year partnered with Gilbert T. Rafferty to become the Boyle & Rafferty Coal Co. According to the *Connellsville Courier* Gilbert F Rafferty (middle initial often confused in sources) already owned half of the Boyle and Hazlett franchise and when Boyle bought out Hazlett, Boyle became an equal partner with Rafferty. <sup>34</sup>

Rafferty was not liked in "cokedom." Newspapers were often very direct and critical. In 1885 the state determined that mining companies could not own the local company stores and they were required to divest themselves. (Most just formed another company.) <sup>35</sup> Rafferty was quoted in the Scottdale newspaper:

"Our employees and those at every mine in the Connellsville region, are Hungarians and other foreigners. They had been laborers working at \$1 and \$1.25 per day. Now they earn \$2 and \$2.50. We pay every month, and without the store the men would receive more money than they ever had in their lives at the same time. They are unable to resist the temptation to

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<sup>32</sup> J. C., "In the Coke Fields, Connellsville Coke on the Mt. Pleasant Branch, Interesting Fossil Remains in Coal Mines, *Pittsburgh Post*, April 20, 1878, p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> "\$600,000 Damages Wanted," *The Keystone Courier*, February 6, 1880, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> "Changes in Coke Firm," *The Keystone Courier*, February 4, 1881, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> *Legislative Documents, Comprising the Department and Other Reports made to the Senate and House of Representatives of PA . . .*, Vol. 4, Bituminous, 1880, Harrisburg: Lane & Hart, state printer. 1881, p. 199.

and

John A. Enman, "Coal Company Store Prices Questioned: A Case Study of the Union Supply Company 1905-1906," *Pennsylvania History*, vol. 41, 1 January 1974, p. 55.

go on a spree, that is, the majority of them. The result is they sober up a few days later without a cent. . .”<sup>36</sup>

In 1886 Rafferty tried to run for Congress. He did that in typical ruthless fashion. The *Scottsdale Independent* reported that Rafferty held a meeting at the same time that his opponent Latta and, “Rafferty’s friends occupied the court house with two brass bands imported for the occasion. This stampeded the Latta meeting and he was deserted while speaking. . .”<sup>37</sup>

Despite Rafferty, times were good and the owners built additional furnaces so they now employed 220 men with 261 beehive coke ovens. In 1882 they began making 24-hour coke and shipping to the Lucy (Carnegie Steel, Duquesne), Eliza (Jones and Laughlin, Pittsburgh), and the Isabella (Etna) furnaces as well as points west of Pittsburgh. This was an important milestone in coking history. The industry began by making 72-hour coke for foundry furnaces. Slowly they improved to 48-hour coke and finally 24-hour coke. It saved valuable time. Many only made 72-hour coke on weekends when they were closed on Sunday.<sup>38</sup>

But Rafferty was not finished. He held interests in nearby works at Alverton. In 1885 Rafferty & Donnelly Coal & Coke Co. bought half interest in the Hazlett mine. It was yet another downturn in the coke industry as only 84 people were employed. Rafferty tried to take advantage of the situation by introducing a huge wagon with no increase in pay per load, but the miners held their own against him and the wagons were replaced by the older versions.<sup>39</sup> That same year Rafferty & Donnelly became McClure & Co. He was slowly building an empire.

By the turn of the century the mine owners at Bridgeport began to see the end of the road. In 1893 neither Hazlett nor Mullin mines were working.<sup>40</sup> In 1895 H.C. Frick Coke Co. bought the Hazlett Mine and leased to McClure until 1900-03.

In 1896 Hazlett shaft was turned into a pumping station. The mine inspectors reported, “This is a very desirable change, as the slope could not properly drain all the water, which was a standing menace to Buckeye, Standard, and Mullin mines. A boiler house was erected and 4 boilers lifted up. Landings were built in a shaft, and 3 pumps placed near the water, which is now pumped down to the shaft bottom from '28 feet of elevation.”<sup>41</sup>

From 1897 to 1899 Hazlett was off the *Connellsville Courier Report of the Operation and Output of the Coke Ovens of the Connellsville Region* list. In 1900 Hazlett was back on the *Courier* list for McClure with 150 ovens. By the end of the year however, Frick took possession of Hazlett and began operating it. But the problems mounted. The 261 beehive coke ovens needed to be rebuilt. Nearly half of them had structural problems, so only 150 ovens were rebuilt and working. From 1905 through 1910 and beyond Hazlett was off the *Connellsville*

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<sup>36</sup> “Miners, Attention: What a Coke Operator Thinks of his Slaves – The Miners of the Connellsville Coke Region,” *Scottsdale Independent*, April 15, 1885, pp. 1, 6.

<sup>37</sup> “Latta and Rafferty, They Address Rival Mass Meetings in the Same Town, *Scottsdale Independent*, October 16, 1886, p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> “Making Coke in Shorter Time,” *Pittsburgh Daily Post*, Feb 2, 1900, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> “The Labor World,” *Scottsdale Intelligencer*, June 17 1885, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> *Reports of the Inspectors of Coal Mines of Pennsylvania 1893*, Harrisburg: State Printer of Pennsylvania, 1894, p. 487.

<sup>41</sup> *Reports of the Inspectors of Coal Mines of Pennsylvania 1896*, Harrisburg: State Printer of PA, 1897, p. 532.

*Courier Report of the Operation and Output of the Coke Ovens of the Connellsville Region* list. This time it appears for good. By 1936 it had been abandoned by Frick.



Remaining coke ovens of the Hazlett Mine. There are only a few, but they may be the oldest known in Westmoreland County and thus historically important to us. They are on private property and the owner does not welcome visitors. These photos were taken by Coke Oven Mike whose other images can be seen on his site *Old Industry of Southwestern Pennsylvania* at <http://coalandcoke.blogspot.com/2013/02/boyle-hazlett-coke-works-bridgeport.html>

More research is needed to find the history of this mine after Frick. We know that in 1936 Mount Pleasant borough sought to use one of the openings of the mine for sewage disposal. Because of interconnection of area mines and fear of fires, they built a Sewage disposal plant in the area instead.

We also know that one of the mine entrances is not sealed for the flood from the interior has formed a small contaminated lake over the entrance. The few coke ovens remaining are on the west and not visible from the Coal & Coke Trail for the trail bends to the east just before. It is unfortunate for the ovens are the most important historic artifact at Bridgeport. They need to remain there and be preserved. Not restored. Just preserved. They are important to the heritage of the Connellsville Coke Region but may not be the original Myer ovens.

Archeologists must find the answer. Hazlett is currently private property.

## MULLIN MINE



*Caption: This RGG5\_UMM\_100\_001\_MULLEN map is overlaid on a road map showing Bridgeport Street dissecting south to north. To the left is the oblong building near the Hazlett coke ovens. The rectangular building is to the north of the Mullin coke ovens. The grassy area is the reclaimed area. The notes on the left-hand area are the various times the map was updated as work continued in the mine up to the 1940s and 50s.*

Some reports state that the Mullin (Mullen) Mine was not built until around 1876. *The Historical Date of the H. C. Frick Coke Company's Plants* reports 1872. In 1876 William D. Mullin created the William D. Mullin Company and built about 40 ovens. He then employed from 20 to 60 men depending on the need. Buckeye, Star, and Hazlett 2 were all to the west of Shupe Run. Hazlett 1 and Mullin were to the east. Mullin had its own company store and the miners received script.

The 1875 *Second Geological Survey of Pennsylvania 1875* reported that Mullin had 60 beehive bank ovens measuring 11'x 5.5' each which could hold a charge of 3.5 to 4 wagon loads. They made 48 and 72 hour coke and shipped 36 cars or 22,500 bushels weekly. Only 35 men were employed.<sup>42</sup> This was 1875 and the mine was operating so founding date of 1876 does not work.

Mullin was a Mount Pleasant man who lived at the corner of Main and Mullin in the borough. He also operated a livery stable and was the director of the First National Bank. Like Hazlett, Mullin began shipping to the Lucy (Carnegie Steel, Duquesne), Eliza (Jones and Laughlin, Pittsburgh), and the Isabella (Etna) furnaces as well as points west of Pittsburgh in 1882. In 1883 ownership changed to Mullin, Strickler and Co., but that was overshadowed by a fire in the underground stables where horses and mules were kept. It killed 4 horses and 1

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<sup>42</sup> Platt, p. 54.

**H. C. FRICK COKE CO.**

**REPORT OF LIVE STOCK**

*Standard* STABLE  
 MONTH ENDING *May 31, 1916*

**RECAPITULATION**

	HORSES	MULES
No. on hand last Report	89	19
No. received since last report		2
Total to be accounted for	89	21
No. working under ground	55	20
" " above "	30	1
" Idle, fit for duty		
" " unfit for duty		
Total No. on hand	85	21
No. killed	1	
" sold or transferred permanently to other mines	2	
Total accounted for	89	21

mule. It also destroyed their fodder and the stables. The owners had to borrow animals from nearby Standard Mine to keep working.

Animals were a key component of mining. The smallest animal in the mines was a canary. Yes, a canary. They would be caged and hung in areas that could have gases and left there. They were checked frequently and if the canary died the men exited the mine as quickly as possible for deadly gases were in the air. Those gases could explode.

The hardest working animals in the mine were the mules and horses. They were used to haul the coal up out of the mine, pull the larry cars over the coke ovens, and take the finished coke to the rail cars.

The animals had a miserable life. These animals were often purchased from nearby farms but Frick had several stock farms to raise his animals. Their life expectancy in the mines was less than a decade.

A local story relates to a mine mule called Rusty. When the horrific explosion happened at the Carpentertown Mine near Mount Pleasant in 1952 the cleanup took a few days. No one thought about the animals. As they looked for victims they spotted Rusty standing in a side tunnel. He was never given hard labor again and became a local hero and children of miners would beg to be placed on his back for a few moments.<sup>43</sup>

*Left: Internal memo on animals at Standard Mine. (Courtesy of Mt Pleasant Area Historical Society.)*

<sup>43</sup> This story was told to me by Bill Hare of Mount Pleasant whose father worked at the Carpentertown Mine.

## AFTER TWO YEARS FIRE IN MULLIN MINE BREAKS OUT.

The Surface Dropped and Admitted Air Which Gave Old  
Blaze Another Fresh Start.

Special to The Courier.  
MT. PLEASANT, Jan. 14.—After two years the fire in the abandoned Mullin plant of the H. C. Frick Coke Company has again broken through to the surface and now the smoke can be plainly seen issuing through the breaks in the surface which crumbled and caved in. The last time traces of the fire were visible was about two years ago.  
Tuesday morning a large portion of the surface sank. The opening is approximately 200 feet across. Volumes of dense smoke pour from the crevice

and can be seen for a considerable distance.

Every effort is being made to smother the fire once more. When the air is cut off the fire will not gain headway but as long as it is reached by draughts it will continue to gain headway and spread rapidly.

It is said the fire originated in 1885 and has been burning ever since. Efforts to extinguish the flames by flooding the mine have failed several times and only by sealing the burning area has kept the damage within limited confines.

Once a fire began, it was almost impossible to extinguish permanently. The most famous mine fire is that of Centralia which has been burning for over 50 years and is estimated to burn for 250 more years. Locally we have had our share of burning mines too. When they were building the new 119 they accidentally opened two mines. The first caused a flood that had to be stopped. The second reignited a fire that had been burning for years but had been smothered by lack of air. As for Mullin it continued to sporadically burn as late as the 1990s.  
Article on left from Connellsville Daily Courier.

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In 1885 the Mullin Mine replaced its animals with machines. Ironically, Frick the innovator, kept animals in his mines far longer than other companies. Where motorized vehicles replaced most animals early in mining history, Frick was still using animals as late as 1930.<sup>45</sup>

Fire, along with water, was among the most feared event in a mine. Coal burned. So did all the byproducts coal produced as it was mined. There were gases underground that could ignite. Yet there had to be light in a mine. The first light was a flame worn on the helmet of the miner. If that flame entered a space where gases were intense there could be an explosion. Of the early mine disasters in the region all were caused by explosions. The Hill Farm Mine fire of 1890 killed 31 (of 57 in mine) and was caused by the lamp flame on a young miner's lamp coming in contact with gases rushing into the mine from a new bore hole. The Mammoth Mine disaster of 1891 killed 109 miners because of a firedamp explosion. As a result Frick began a mine safety program that became the industry standard. The worse year in our area was 1907 and that year the worse mine disaster was the Darr Mine along the Youghiogheny River near Van Meter where 239 miners were killed. Again an open flame miner's lamp was probably to blame. We still have mine disasters.

By 1891 the ownership of Mullin changed again as it was absorbed into the McClure Coke Company and, as noted earlier, in 1895 McClure succumbed to H. C. Frick. The very next year Frick stopped the pumps that were pumping out water 24 hours a day and found a way to drain the water naturally. He did not start mining efforts until 1901 and at that time Mullin had 82 beehive coke ovens (often idle).<sup>46</sup> Eight years later the mine was flooded and sealed. By 1910 it was off the *Connellsville Courier Report of the Operation and Output of the Coke Ovens of the Connellsville Region* list.

Today it is evident that Mullin was heavily strip mined. It went through an extensive reclamation project in the 1970s. The industry that brought immigrants to America had its

<sup>44</sup> "After Two Years Fire in Mullin Mine Breaks Out," *Connellsville Daily Courier*, January 14, 1911, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> HABS/HAER, p. 51.

<sup>46</sup> "Blast Furnaces Banked," *Connellsville Daily Courier*, November 15, 1901, p. 2.

problems. It built a nation, but it has left behind incredible carnage. The putrid air that damaged lungs, ate the surface off of metals, and turned daylight into night dissipated once the coke ovens were extinguished. But the underground cave-ins causing subsidence continue. The drainage into streams continues.

As early as 1927 the state became involved in trying to curtail the damage to our waterways. That year a bill was passed called the Goehring Bill which was to seal all abandoned mines in Pennsylvania. Sealing a mine was a way to contain fires by cutting off the oxygen, to stop anything from coming out of the mine carrying pollutants, and hopefully to guarantee better water.

There were thousands of mines in Pennsylvania. Each mine had many holes: entrances, air vents, caved-in areas, and more. It took until 1936 before the project reached Westmoreland County. In that year the state hired 199 unemployed miners to help seal mines for the WPA.

On August 30, 1937, *The Daily Courier* of Connellsville reported there were 3,464 abandoned mines in Western Pennsylvania, 1,003 idle mines, 2,130 working mines and all had acid mine drainage.<sup>47</sup> To this point the WPA had sealed 400 openings in the area and filled 60,000 cave-ins. The estimate for completion of the job was ten years. By 1949 the state began sealing abandoned mines along Jacobs Creek. The effort has not stopped. Billions and billions of dollars have been spent and the challenge remains.



## AND ONE MORE: DUNCAN MINE

The last entry on the map of the Mount Pleasant Broadford Railroad (see illustration) is Duncan & Bros. It is located one mile north of Bridgeport at the end of the line. Interestingly, it is just across route 31 from the beginning of the Standard mines, which were not serviced by this railroad at that time. Standard became one of the biggest and best mines not only in the United States but in the world.

<sup>47</sup> "Mine Sealing in State will Take 10 Years," *The Daily Courier*, August 30, 1937, p. 8.

*Resumé of Coke Works on the Mt. Pleasant Branch of the Pittsburg and Connellsville Railroad.*

NAME OF FIRM.	No. of ovens....	Kind of ovens..	Number of men employed.....	Weekly production—cars.....	Where shipped.
Frick & Co.....	101	Bank..	62	66	Chicago, Milwaukee and Salt Lake City.
Morgan & Co.....	111	Bank..	80	70	West as far as California.
Strickler, Lane & Co.....	44	Bank..	30	28	
Hutchinson & Co.....	63	Bank..	45	38	West, on order.
Markle, Sherrick & Co.....	80	Bank..	60	50	West.
Summit Mines—					
Hurst, Moore & Co.....	101	Bank..	75	66	Morgan & Co.
Charlotte Furnace.....	50	Bank..	35	30	Furnace.
Keifer & Co.....	10	Bank..	8	6	Pittsburg & Harrisburg.
Fountain Mines—					
Ihmien, Lake & Co.....	50	Block,	35	33	East and west, to order.
Dexter Mines—					
J. R. Stauffer & Co.....	40	Bank..	30	25	East and west, to order..
Painter & Co.....	70	Bank..	32	40	West.
Lomanson & Stauff.....	30	Bank..	15	20	East.
Markle & Co.....	70	Bank..	45	46	Sherrick, Markle & Co.
J. F. Overholt.....	36	Bank..	20	36 <sup>7</sup>	Lake & Co.
West Overton—					
A. R. S. Overholt & Co...	62	Bank..	50	36	East.
Buckeye Mines—					
Cochran & Ewing.....	60	Bank..	36	38	West.
J. T. Stauffer & Co.....	20	Bank..	12	13	West.
William D. Mullin.....	60	Bank..	35	36	Sherrick, Markle & Co.
Boyle and Hazlett.....	171	Bank..	125	120	Chicago.
Duncan & Bro.....	25	Block,	20	13	West, to order.
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>1,284</b>		<b>870</b>	<b>700</b>	

The illustration tells us that Duncan Mine had 25 ovens laid out in block form and employed 20 men and sent its orders west.

This mine is only listed in two other places: first is the trusted Franklin Platt's *Second Geological Survey of Pennsylvania 1875 Special Report*.

In that report Platt has the same figures as our illustration but adds that the beehive ovens are 11.5' x 5.5' in size and use four wagons full of coal for their charge. They make seventy-two hour coke and produce 13 cars (8,125 bushels) of coke each week. It was anticipated that Duncan

would add an additional 25 block ovens already in development.<sup>48</sup> The second place is the *Annals* of 1877 printed in 1878. It reports that the Duncan Mine with its slope entrance was not working and was full of water.<sup>49</sup>

One other place where Duncan is mentioned is in the *Report of the Department of Mines* in 1909. But that reference is to the Union Mine in Alverton, which one must assume William Duncan owned. However, his name is not mentioned in any record that I have found related to the Union Mine and Coke Works at Alverton.

The Duncan name is immortalized in an area of Mount Pleasant Township called the Duncan Plan. This was an area of land located to the east of Mount Pleasant borough which was owned by the Duncan family and, in addition to the former coke ovens, had the Duncan mansion on it. It was developed in 1905 into industrial space along the Mount Pleasant Broadford Railroad and residential space to the east up the hillside. As the map indicates 15 manufacturing sites were established. The map does not show the Duncan Mine or its coke

ovens. In 1907 L. E. Smith glass manufacturers purchased land in the Duncan Plan and established their factory. That building still stands.

<sup>48</sup> Platt, pp. 54-55.

<sup>49</sup> *Annual Report*, 1878, p. 250. Thanks to Julie Porterfield of the Coal & Coke Heritage Center of the Penn State Fayette Campus for this information.



1893 H. C. Frick Coke Company map.

One thing is sure there was a Duncan Mine at the end of the Mount Pleasant Broadford Railroad sometime in the 1870s. In all probability its above ground buildings including beehive coke ovens were to the south of Route 31. However part of the mine could have been to the north of Route 31 too. It could have straddled the road because there were original ovens and, as mentioned above, 25 new ones were already in construction when the mine apparently closed.

Obviously more research is needed. This time the archaeologists should be involved.

## AFTERMATH

When the Industrial Revolution came to America, Western Pennsylvania became the fulcrum of the nation. It had the two most important things: the natural resources and the rivers to transport its product to 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the nation. Coal begat coke which begat steel. Sand begat glass. The rich soil begat rye which begat whiskey. All of them were transported on the Mon where over 50% of the steam boats for the nation were built. Those boats traveled the waterways to 2/3<sup>ds</sup> of the nation: the Mon to the Ohio to the Mississippi to New Orleans. Or the Mon to the Ohio to the Missouri to the forts of the Dakotas. It all began here.

It is difficult to imagine a world without what coal and coke contributed. Was the pollution worth it? Without the industry there would not have been such an immigration to a new land with new hope. Without the industry our railroad system would have been far less than what it was, fewer bridges would have been built, and even the advent of the automobile would be questionable. Would we have won World War I and World War II without what the coal and coke industry gave us? Doubtful. So why do we not honor this industry and its story?

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**NOTE:** This preliminary research is by no means complete. Much more work needs to be done to confirm and reconfirm the facts and conclusions drawn in the limited time of this short grant. All the facts recorded here have sources. The problem is the sources contradict each other. The speculators traded land as frequently as they traded partners. In a single day a piece of land would be conveyed from one group to a second who would sell it to a third. Even government reports vary as to name of owner, number of ovens, number of workers, and more. I have contacted dozens of government sources and no one seems to know if mines had to be incorporated and who governed over them once they were. These include Pennsylvania State Archives, Philadelphia Archives, Penn State University Archives, Pennsylvania Historical Society, Westmoreland County Recorded or Deeds, Westmoreland County Prothonotary, Westmoreland County GIS, Abandoned Mine Reclamation, Westmoreland Conservancy, and PA Department of Environmental Protection – California District Office, Office. All were helpful, but the answers to my queries were not found in their expertise.

To further complicate matters the mines at Bridgeport were referred to under a number of names. For example on April 7, 1919 Connellsville *Daily Courier* page 8 stated: "The 100 ovens at the Bridgeport mine were recently blown out and the mine capacity has been diverted to shipment by river." This is very important but there was no mine called the Bridgeport mine. There was the Star, the Buckeye, the Mullin, and the Hazlett.

But what we have achieved is an amazing resource of which we are proud.