

# THE MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL

## Trail receives Pa. DCNR funding

by David Wright

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources approved \$15,000 funding for acquisition and \$89,000 for development of the Montour Trail. The Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Act made approximately \$1,000,000 available statewide for the Rails-to-Trails program in 1997. The announcement was made at the Governor's Conference on Greenways and Trails in Camp Hill, PA on April 28.

The acquisition funding is available to purchase the 1.85 mile-long abandoned Peters Creek Branch formerly of the Pennsylvania Railroad. This corridor extends from Large to Clairton in Jefferson Borough. The Dick Corporation is considering to offer this 28.42 acre parcel for sale.

The development funding is available to construct trail improvements for 0.6 miles between the Peters Township line, through the Municipality of Bethel Park and South Park Township, and the bridge over Library Road (SR 88). The conceptual estimated project cost is \$60,000. We applied to South Park Township for site plan approval and to Bethel Park for a grading permit. We will also request permission from Peters Township for construction access and

to develop 468 feet of trail it owns in Allegheny County.

Keystone funds cover 50% of the costs. We received preliminary approval for the required matching funds in Allegheny County from the Allegheny Land Trust. The Land Trust receives its funds from the Allegheny Regional Asset District, which collects the 1% County sales tax.

The new development funds are also available to help install a bridge over Robinson Highway (SR 980) and extend trail improvements for 1.8 miles north to Champion Processing Co. Robinson Township, which constructed the 3.0 mile section that opened in April, has pledged to continue providing construction services. The services are now eligible to match the 50% Keystone funds. The total conceptual estimated project cost is \$49,000 for the bridge and \$75,000 for the trail improvements.

Keystone funds approved in 1995 are also helping us to acquire the 5.13 acre Donaldson Heirs parcel. It extends from SR 980 to a point 300 feet south of Beagle Club Rd. It was one of the few parcels that reverted to the original owners when the Montour Railroad was abandoned in 1984.

## Montour Railroad book a runaway hit!

by Deborah Hoerster

As a young boy growing up in Bethel Park, author Gene Schaeffer's love of trains and railroads grew from the toy train under the Christmas tree to the Norfolk and Western railroad

"I've been waiting for this book a long time."  
Dennis Pfeiffer  
V.P. MTC

"I couldn't put it down."  
Tim Killmeyer  
Newsletter Editor

which ran nearly a football field away from his backyard. But the real love of his life was the Montour Railroad where

he was employed fresh out of high school for approximately 6 1/2 years. He spent the first two years on the track gang, and the remaining 4 1/2 years as a

"I just like looking at the pictures"  
Richard L. Quasey  
MTC Board Member

"Dear Mr. Schaeffer:  
Your book on the Montour Railroad is great."  
Dave Wright  
Trail Engineer

dispatcher. His preservation of old photographs, maps, dispatch sheets and other memorabilia prompted him to write

an amazing pictorial history book - the first of its kind - on the Montour Railroad Company.

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WATER STUDY  
TO BEGIN IN  
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VALLEY  
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**NEWEST TRAIL  
SECTION  
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OPEN!  
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**LOCAL  
DENTIST GETS  
FREE  
BRIDGEWORK  
SEE PAGE 3**





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25 REGINA DR.**

**MCKEES ROCKS, PA. 15136**

Or E-mail to: 74144.103@compuserve.com

All other trail correspondence should be addressed:

**MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL  
P.O. BOX 11866  
PITTSBURGH PA. 15228-0866**

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**Newsletter** Tim M. Killmeyer  
**Editor**

**Circulation** Jerry Agin  
**Manager**

The Montour Trail Council is an *all volunteer* organization founded in 1989 to convert the abandoned Montour Railroad right of way and the abandoned Peters Creek Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad into a fifty-five mile recreational trail for non-motorized activity regardless of physical ability or financial wherewithal.

## EDITOR'S OBSERVATIONS

Well the membership numbers are picking up and just in time too, with summer right around the corner. We are finding that the more trail we build the more we have to maintain. And since most of our foundation grants are restricted right now for building more trail, unrestricted funds are becoming exceedingly tight. Fortunately, by piggybacking the rental of some of our porta-potties on the rental of Robinson Township, Allegheny County (thank you Robinson) we were able to afford to keep another potty at the newest sections. We still haven't found a grant specifically for latrines but we haven't given up hope. Won't it be nice when the whole 55 miles is finished and all we have to do is maintain it?

Things are looking very favorable for trails at the State level and there is more interest than ever in finishing the connection between Pittsburgh and Washington D.C. The Montour Trail figures heavily into the equation, if not on the map, then because of our large and enthusiastic membership and our steady progress. (The connection to the Airport helps.)

Speaking of progress, with the recently announced Keystone Grants (thanks to Dave Wright for working on those voluminous application forms) could lead us to having even more trail on the ground come fall. What do you think of a connection between the end of the Arrowhead Trail in Peters Township and the Library Trestle over Route 88? Or, how about a bridge over Route 980 by Quick-silver Golf Course and another 1 1/2 to 2 miles of trail? Both could be a reality sooner than you think.

By the way, the new 1997 Trail Guides are out. Look for them in the brochure boxes along the Trail and at MTC functions throughout the year. See ya on the Trail!

*Tim*

## Letters

**THE MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER** welcomes all questions and comments. Please send all correspondence to the address on the left.



May						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

# Calendar

JUNE						
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

- ♦ **MTC Board Meeting**, every **third Monday** of the month - Second floor of Chartiers Valley High School, in the Library. Turn left off of the Kirwan Heights exit of I-79. Turn left at the next light, go under the Interstate, and the school is on your left. Call Marshall at 531-8628 for more information or to get on the agenda.
- ♦ **Cecil Friends of the Trail meeting**, every **first Tuesday** of the month - in the Boy Scout room at the Cecil American Legion, Rt. 50, 7:30. Call 221-6406
- ♦ **Work & Clean-up party**, Cecil segment, every **third Saturday** of the month - 9:00 am. Meet at Stewart's Mini-Warehouse yard. Call 221-6406 for more information.
- ♦ **Moon/Robinson Friends of the Trail meeting**, Every Wednesday before the second Saturday of the month at 7:00. At the All Occasion Catering party room near the intersection of Silver Lane and Clever Rd.s in Robinson Twp. Anyone from the communities near Moon and Robinson are encouraged to attend. Call 859-3020 more information.
- ♦ **Work & Clean-up party**, Moon/Robinson segment, every **second Saturday** of the month - 9:00 am. Meet at North Star Petroleum (Formerly Robinson Petroleum). Call 262-3748 for more information.
- ♦ **Findlay/ North Fayette Friends of the Trail** Call Don at 899-3695 for more information.
- ♦ **Work & Clean-up party**, Findlay/North Fayette segment, every **forth Saturday** of the month - 9:00 am. Meet at the Enlow Ballfield. Call 695-2354 for more information.
- ♦ **Pennies for your Trail Day**, Moon/Robinson section, **May 10**, from 9am to 3pm.
- ♦ **IKEA 1/2 Marathon and 5K**, Montour Trail, **Sept. 13, 1997**. More details to follow.

## Hendersonville section gets new bridgework courtesy of local dentist

by John Hooton

This article could probably be subtitled "The Power of Friendship", or "It Never Hurts to Ask", or even "The Phoenix Bridge". Let's set the scene: Hendersonville is about half as big as its name is long, and for those who haven't had the pleasure, it's about 4 miles south of Bridgeville. Of course, EVERYONE knows where Bridgeville is. Right? Ten years ago, a metals company decided the old railroad bridge was too low to let its semi trailers pass to and from its yard, so they simply yanked it out.

In 1989 the Montour Trail Council comes along and ultimately owned that old span on Route 519. 1996 sees the completion of 1 1/4 miles of new Trail from Rt. 519 east to Chartiers Creek. That's great because we already (1993) have Trail finished from the opposite

should of Rt. 519 for 4 1/2 miles west to Cecil Park. Now, how can we afford to replace 100' of "air rights" with a usable bridge that is at least bike and people friendly?

Being a good hound dog helps. Dave Wright, our property acquisition guy, learned of a steel mill that is being sold for scrap in Moonshine. Dave sets a bargain at \$16,000 at two usable bridges with combined lengths of 220 feet! Compare a 70' span we were given earlier that cost its original owner \$100,000!. But I digress.

Then Paul Rankin, DMD, longtime area resident, shows up. He's had plenty of experience acting as his own general contractor in building his own residence, and just recently his own 4 story office building. Now he goes to work for us. Within a two-week period, he

arranged for Dave Minnotte of Minnotte Manufacturing to send a crew to Monessen to semi trailer the bridge to Ambridge, PA where Paul has John Lowry of ESP, Inc. waiting to sandblast, prime and paint our new span. Minnotte then is to haul the bridge back to Hendersonville. Paul will, in the meantime have built new abutments on the shoulders of our Trail to receive it. Now George Mendel of Mendel Steel will weld the two 50' "traveling" sections back together (the is the "Phoenix" part) so it can rise again.

Paul is now looking for a crane company to complete the final leg of this glorious trek, and we're betting that he'll find one. Any takers?. Many thanks to Paul and his friends- its a wonderful story and one we find to be more and more reflective of our Friends of the Trail. ♦



## Ribbon cutting ceremony in Washington County

by Deborah Hoerster

A ribbon cutting ceremony took place in Washington County on April 19, 1997, opening an additional three mile section of the Montour Trail. J. Bracken Burns, Washington County Commissioner, Victor J. Lescovitz, State Representative, and Gerald



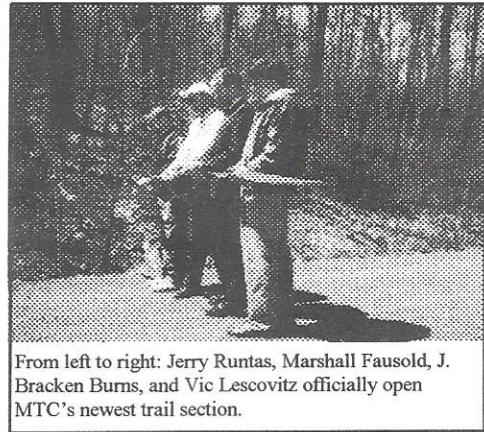
Hardworking MTC volunteers spent several weekends before the Grand Opening installing fencing and mile-markers. Thanks to Jerry Sattinger for her home cooked lunches delivered to the Trail.

Runtas, Chairman, Robinson Township Supervisors

were on hand to do the honors and to say a few words.

Over 100 people attended the ceremony and enjoyed the sunny day with a walk or bike ride on the newly opened trail section. Refreshments were provided by the Montour Trail Council, while volunteers sold Trail paraphernalia from the portable MTC super store.

MTC President, Marshall Fausold, was on hand as Master of Ceremonies for this grand event. Many thanks to him and to Tim Killmeyer for his organizational efforts in making this a fun-filled day. ♦



From left to right: Jerry Runtas, Marshall Fausold, J. Bracken Burns, and Vic Lescovitz officially open MTC's newest trail section.

**MTC WEB  
ADDRESS**



Visit the Montour Trail web-site at: <http://trfn.clpgh.org/orgs/mtc/>

## Alliance plans aid for Montour Run Valley

by Stan Sattinger

Recent occurrences of flooding and contamination of Montour Run Creek have become a problem for Pittsburgh Area segments of the Montour Trail and the adjoining communities. The Montour Valley Alliance, a coalition of civic organizations, businesses, agencies, and citizens, has been formed as an initiative of the Hollow Oak Land Trust to seek improved conditions for this stream and its watershed. The Alliance has already sponsored a comprehensive water quality study that will serve as a benchmark for future stream testing.

While searching for solutions for these problems, the Alliance is also looking into ways to protect and enhance the Valley's natural and cultural resources to further improve quality of life and generate tourism and other economic benefits. One of the ideas being

discussed includes creating a greenway and heritage corridor along the stream. To gather other ideas and open up a forum for public discussion, we will soon be starting up the Montour Run Watershed Project, in which an outside consultant will work with us to generate a plan for sustainable growth in the Valley. The outcomes of this project may lead the way to future implementation projects in the Montour Valley - projects such as stream bank erosion control and treatment of polluting outflows from abandoned mines.

We will be reaching out to the entire community for input to this project, and we hope that Trail users will be among those who will attend the public meetings. The next issue of the **MONTOUR TRAIL-LETTER** will provide more details. ♦



## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

- |                          |                           |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| ☆ Georgeann M. Amodeo    | ☆ Jim Sartori             |
| ☆ Lynn A. Brickett       | ☆ Carl & Joan Schweiger   |
| ☆ Valerie E. Delise      | ☆ Steven R. Seaman        |
| ☆ Marianne L. Fry        | ☆ Ben & Kay Shinsky       |
| ☆ G. D. Gamret           | ☆ Lou Steinmiller         |
| ☆ William P. Gillespie   | ☆ Chuck Susanin           |
| ☆ Peter E. Grandillo, Jr | ☆ Ms. Debra L. Talerico   |
| ☆ Richard W. Hammack     | ☆ Robert Thompson         |
| ☆ Elaine & Bernard       | family                    |
| Healey                   | ☆ Gerald Tomaszewski      |
| ☆ Thomas T. Heidcamp     | ☆ Mr. George R. Watzlaf   |
| ☆ Ellen & Steven Hesky   | ☆ Robert F. Wohleber, Jr. |
| ☆ Gerald Himmelrick      | ☆ Ellen Wright            |
| ☆ Frank Jeffers          |                           |
| ☆ Eric Killmeyer         |                           |
| ☆ Elaine Kurtanich       |                           |
| ☆ David A. Lewis         |                           |
| ☆ Joyce & Bill Mehalic   |                           |
| ☆ Nathan Mentzer         |                           |
| ☆ Edward & Sue Miller    |                           |
| ☆ Donna Reda             |                           |
| ☆ Linda Rumberg          |                           |

*The Montour Trail Council would like to welcome these new members and thank them for their support. We would also like to thank all our members who have renewed their membership and remind all that a growing membership is one of the criteria foundations look for when we apply for grants.*

## Trail Day at Imperial Shop-n-Save

by Pete Merther

On Saturday March 22, 1997, representatives of the Montour Trail Council set up two display tables at the Imperial Shop-n-Save to create awareness of the Trail among customers and employees. Many people stopped to look at the "before" and "after" photographs. Volunteers from the MTC gave them brochures and newsletters and answered questions pertaining to Trail location, parking areas, possible completion dates, etc. They also explained that the Trail was built by volunteers and people are always needed to maintain it and help build further sections. Several people showed an interest in volunteering as Friends of the Trail. There was also an interest on the part of some Cub Scouts to place bird houses on the Trail.

We would like to thank Imperial Shop-n-Save and its manager, Dan Hurley, for giving the MTC the opportunity to educate the community about the beauty and benefits of the Trail. We hope they will be able to help us in future events.

We would also like to thank the people who braved the cold weather on Saturday at the outdoor booth: Karen Boyce, who coordinated the event, Debby Hoerster, Angie Lake, and Donna Reda.

## Yes, I want to help build the Montour Trail!

- ☐ I want to spread the word. Please send me additional flyers.
- ☐ I have written my Legislator and County Commissioners asking them to support the trail.
- ☐ My organization would like to provide a letter of endorsement.
- ☐ I know a group interested in a presentation.
- ☐ I wish to become a member of the Montour Trail Council.

- |                                       |            |
|---------------------------------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT      | \$5        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> INDIVIDUAL   | \$15       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAMILY       | \$25       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ORGANIZATION | \$50       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SUPPORTING   | \$50       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SUSTAINING   | \$100      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BENEFACTOR   | \$250 + up |

(Membership is tax deductible)

- ☐ I wish to make an additional tax deductible contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the Montour Trail Council to help make the Montour Trail a reality.

(Make your check payable to the Montour Trail Council)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE (day time) \_\_\_\_\_ (evening) \_\_\_\_\_

By applying for membership in the Montour Trail Council, I indicate my support of its goals.

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling tollfree, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

Please fill out this application and return it with your check to:

**MONTOUR TRAIL COUNCIL**  
P.O. BOX 11866  
PITTSBURGH PA. 15228-0866

**DON'T FORGET! The Montour Trail Council  
may be designated as your United Way Contributor  
Choice option #3308 where you work.**



**BOOK**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

This pictorial history is 144 pages, all black and white format that contains an indepth history of the Montour Railroad from conception in the late 1800's through abandonment in the mid 1980's. It also contains many never before seen photographs of operations, construction and abandonment. Rosters of equipment are also contained in this very neatly laid out book.

This book is available in both soft and hardcover. Softcover price is \$29.95 and can be found in some hobby shops or purchased directly from the publisher if you include sales tax plus \$4.50 shipping charge.

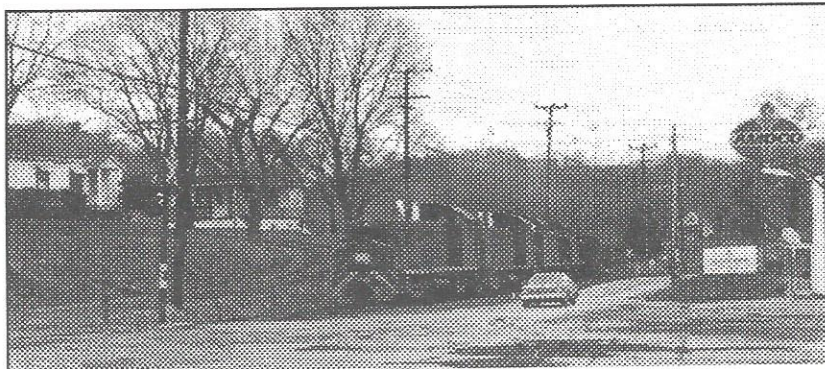


photo courtesy of Gene Schaeffer  
Montour Engines #s 78-84-77-74 approaching the "5 points" intersection in Imperial on Feb. 24, 1981. (Next to Montour Trail 8 mile-marker.)

This book is available through: Silver Brook Junction Publishers,  
P.O. Box 325  
Telford, Pennsylvania 18969.

Any additional information can be obtained by writing to: Gene Schaeffer, 4630 Cook Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa 15236-1922. ◆

## Are you an ARMCO Steel employee?

The Montour Trail Council would like to hear from any Armco Steel Employees who are either members of the MTC or who use the Montour Trail. We need to have this information for grant application purposes. Please call Dave Wright at 350-6645 (daytime) or 746-2517 (evenings). ◆

## Allegheny Trail Alliance visits MTC

by Bruce Barron

To complete a big project, someone needs to keep an eye on the big picture. For rails-to-trails in our region, that "someone" is the Allegheny Trail Alliance (ATA), which reported on its recent progress at the Montour Trail Council's April board meeting.

The ATA is a coalition of seven trail organizations working toward the long-awaited completion of a direct, uninterrupted trail connection from Pittsburgh to Washington, D.C. It was created because the individual trail council recognized their ability to secure both public and private funding would be greater if they worked together rather than separately.

Carl Rebele of Deep Creek, Md. and Linc Van Sickle of Somerset-ATA board members affiliated with the Allegheny Highlands Trail-shared aspects of the ATA's planned marketing strategy, which is to be finalized this summer. Perhaps the most important task completed thus far has been the comprehensive cost assessment for completing the

remaining 117 miles of trail. The total cost estimate was \$23.5 million. "This report enables us to go to prospective funders and show them what we need," Van Sickle explained. The ATA intends to raise funds for completion of the seven trails, while the individual councils will bear responsibility for maintenance of their own trail miles. Rebele emphasized that the ATA raises its own money and does not depend on the member councils for financial support. While it may need to play an oversight role to assure accountability for funds secured, the ATA is determined to direct available money as fully as possible to actual trail building rather than overhead.

Rebele warned that trail advocates will face tough battles to complete the job, saying that "we will have to be ready to defend what we want to do against those who don't want money to go for trails."

As the MTC is the only one of the seven member trails not on the direct path between downtown Pittsburgh and Washington, we are privileged to have been included as an equal ATA partner and will share in the benefits of its advocacy. Marshall Fausold and Bill Metzger represent the MTC on the ATA board and would welcome your suggestions as to how the ATA can best work toward getting its job done. ◆



## Excerpt from Chapter 1

### **The Montour Railroad** copyright 1997, by Gene P. Schaeffer

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**The Montour Railroad Company** was organized under laws of the state of Pennsylvania on September 10, 1877. Letters of patent issued gave the right to a common carrier to construct and operate a railroad from the bank of the Ohio River near the mouth of Montour Run Creek on the northeast side of Coraopolis, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania following Montour Run southerly to the village of Guy's Mills, a distance of about five miles.

**The primary purpose** of the Montour Railroad was to furnish facilities for marketing roughly 1,184 acres of bituminous coal owned by the Imperial Coal Company. This coal was located several miles from the Ohio River and was without transportation facilities. It was also anticipated that the line would serve a rich farming district. The Imperial Coal Company and its officers promoted the railroad and owned all of its Capital Stock amounting to \$40,000.

**Before construction began** the Imperial Coal Company conceived a further extension of the Montour to reach other coal lands south of Guy's Mills. Thus on August 1, 1878 the North Fayette Railroad Company was organized under the Laws of the State of Pennsylvania to construct and operate a railroad from Guy's Mills to the lands of Robert Wilson near the Valley Presbyterian Church in Imperial, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania.

**The North Fayette Railroad** Company had authorized Capital Stock of \$25,000. It should be noted there are no records, not even a record book, of the North Fayette Railroad that would indicate it acquired any property, did any financing or had any corporate operations.

**Shortly thereafter**, on September 10, 1878, the Montour Railroad and the North Fayette Railroad entered into an agreement of consolidation and merger

under the name of the Montour Railroad Company.

**The new Capital Stock** would be the combined stock of both companies

amounting to \$65,000.

This stock was not sufficient to purchase a right-of-way and carry on construction and was soon increased to \$100,000.

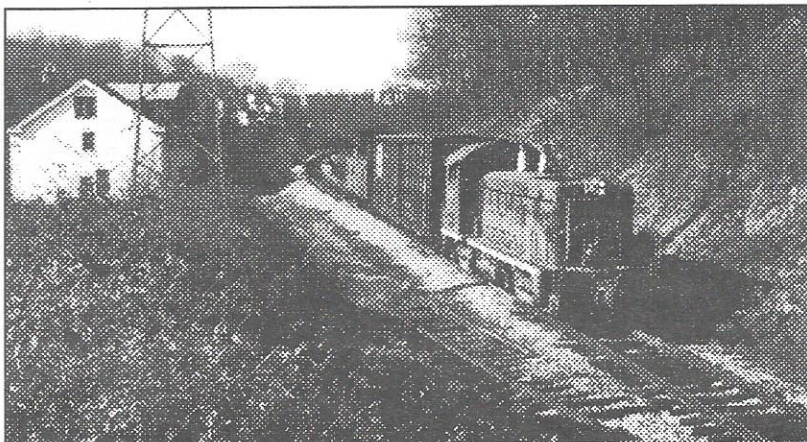
**Shortly before** the beginning of any actual construction, the Imperial Coal Company began preparations for its first mine, the Dickson Mine, which would be located at Cliff Mine Station on the Montour Railroad.

**Coal shipments** on the new Montour Railroad commenced during June, 1879 and averaged 800 to 1,000 tons daily. These first shipments were routed to the Ohio River where the coal was loaded into river barges for transportation to Pittsburgh and points as far south as the Mississippi River. This lasted until October, 1879 when a connection with the newly constructed Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad was completed.

**About the same time**, another small link in the Montour Railroad was constructed from Imperial to the Partridge Farm in North Fayette Township, a distance of two miles, where the Partridge Mine of the Imperial Coal Company would be located.

**Passenger service** on the Montour Railroad began in October, 1879, serving

fifteen stations along its twelve-mile length. Service was supplied on a regular schedule shown on the timetables of the Montour Railroad as well as those of the



November 12, 1980 Brookside turn Montour Extra 80 East passes removed Henderson Spur, Hendersonville, Pa. White building was Company Store from coal mining days in which the Town of Hendersonville was formed.

Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad.

**The Montour Railroad** began carrying U.S. Mail under contract with the U.S. Government during October, 1879, route #8127. During June of 1891, the route number was changed to #110127. Railway Express provided stations on the Montour Railroad with Express Service utilizing tariffs to various stations.

**During August, 1879**, the Imperial Coal Company contracted Joseph Soison of Connellsville, Pennsylvania to begin construction of coke ovens on the Ewing Farm, about two miles inland from the Ohio River. The agreement called for the construction of between 50 and 100 ovens at a cost of \$70 each.

**Employment at the Imperial Coal** Company, including its Montour Railroad and Coke Oven operation, totaled 400 employees.

**The terminal at Imperial**, with a population of 600, was nicknamed "Montour City" in recognition of the Montour Railroad. ♦

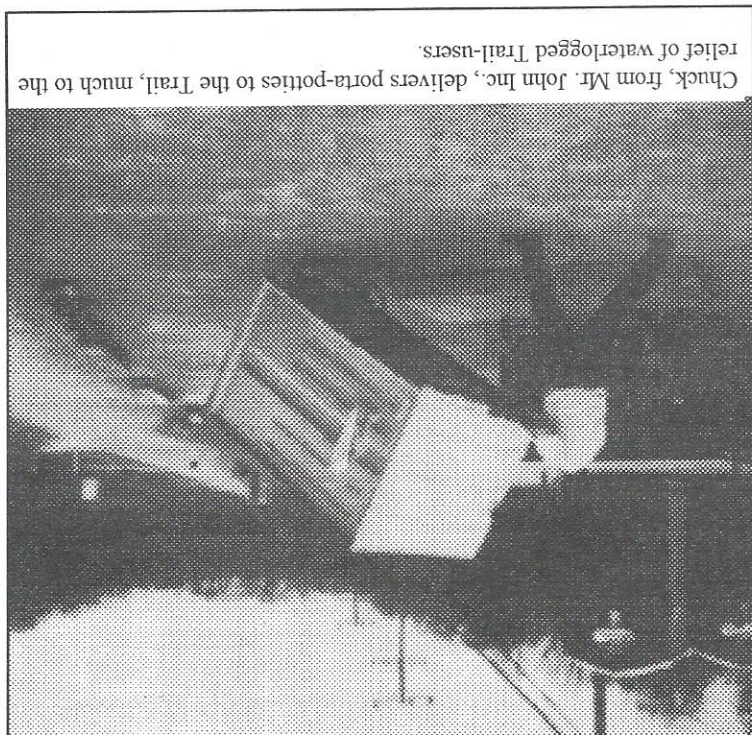




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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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Chuck, from Mr. John Inc., delivers porta-potties to the Trail, much to the relief of waterlogged Trail-users.

Once again there were no grants available to pay for porta-potties along the Trail. So as in previous years, the Board of the Montour Trail Council has voted to use unrestricted funds for this purpose. These funds come mainly from membership fees. This year eight potties were rented for use in various places around the Trail. This is the most requested amenity of Trail-users. If you don't renew your membership (or join) for any other reason, this should be it. Nothing else puts a smile on people's faces like the sight of these facilities. Happy trails! ♦

## What a relief!