

# Collieries Around Mahanoy City

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The Hartford Colliery, operated by capitalists from Hartford, Connecticut, was located south of the 600 square on East Mahanoy Street. The coal was mined in two drifts, located between Main and Catawissa Streets. The inside foreman was John Weber, and the outside foreman was Peter Malia -- two Germans. The coal was hauled in mine cars, drawn by four mules, along the side of the mountain, south of town to a trestle leading to the breaker, and dumped. Michael Ryan, who married Mary Ann Keegan, and his brother, Martin, (many years afterwards driver for the Humane Fire Company) drove the four-mule team from the Hartford drifts to the Hartford breaker.

The original company who opened and operated this breaker which was known as the "Hartford" was composed of Edward Gorman and friends from Port Carbon. Mr. Gorman was a brother of Patrick J. Campion's mother and a first cousin of Peter, Thomas, and David Gorman of Mahanoy City. They sold the breaker to some capitalists from New England. The Gormans then opened and operated what was known as the "new" Gorman's Colliery on the same railroad tracks nearer the tunnel.

What is known as the Hartford Drift and later Baldwin's Drift was directly south of the "City Shirt Dressing Department" 108-110 West Maple Street. John Holland, Sr. opened up the Hartford Drift but soon after it was operated by Philip Conrad and William Cowley. Conrad was formerly superintendent of Wiggan's and Treible Colliery and Cowley was formerly superintendent of a regional operation. George King, William Tyler and John Bryant operated this plant at a later date. This was the old Hartford Drift. They hauled the prepared coal over Catawissa Street to the Reading tracks and loaded it into railroad cars near the gas house. The famous Riot of June 3, 1875, occurred at this operation. Sheriff Werner read the Riot act. That afternoon two companies of the National Guard of Pennsylvania arrived from Pottsville and were in Mahanoy City for several days when they were relieved by the Harrisburg Grays and Wrightsville Zouaves.

In the early eighties, Layton Baldwin operated this colliery which was then called the Baldwin Drift. He constructed chutes at Fourth Street (the present location of the Mahanoy Township High School) to load coal into railroad cars and transported the coal from this point. This mine was later sold by Baldwin. He went to North Dakota and took up farming. While in Mahanoy City he lived at 34 West Mahanoy Street in the same house which Charles Conrad, Sr., his predecessor in the same mines, had resided.

Whip-poor-will Colliery was back of the 500 square on East Mahanoy Avenue up on the mountain, but not as far up as the Hartford Colliery. A party of Welshmen operated this place. Their names were: David Reynolds, Richard Phillips, Walter Lewis, and John Griffiths. David Lewis was outside foreman.

Cole's Colliery (now Tunnel Ridge) was owned by George W. Cele, who built a breaker and commenced shipping coal in December 1863. In 1878 it became a P&R colliery. Thomas Lewis, Sr., father of Dr. Thomas Lewis, was general superintendent here and Thomas Williams was inside foreman. The latter was shot in the labor troubles of 1875. He resided at 539 East Center Street. John Shipman was outside foreman in 1878. Cole's Patch extended from the end of Stony Point to what is known as Seven Blocks. The last-named place is now included in Cole's Patch. John Forster, son of Peter Forster, was loader boss at this colliery.

Suffolk Colliery was also known as Fiske's Colliery. A company of men from Boston Massachusetts under the leadership of Pliny Fiske of Suffolk County in that state operated this mine in 1864. The following year it was sold to the Suffolk Coal Company. John Phillips was superintendent and his son, Captain Edward Phillips, was outside foreman. The village of Suffolk contained thirty houses and a Union church. Smith and Krebs owned the first store in the village.

St. Nicholas Colliery was also known as Cake's Colliery. Colonel Henry Cake and his partner, Mr. Guise, opened this mine in 1861 and operated it for many years. The colliery is not standing now but was about seven hundred yards east of Suffolk Colliery. The village near the breaker was known as Cake's Patch or St. Nicholas. At present the village of St. Nicholas comprises the villages of Boston Run, Wiggans, Suffolk, and Cake's.

Wiggan and Treibles' Colliery stood at what is known as upper Wiggan's and the village was known as Wiggans. Later this colliery was identified with Bear Run Colliery. George Wiggan was an Englishman who lived at Tamaqua where he had mining operations twenty years prior to coming into the Mahanoy valley. He lived in a beautiful home which stood back in a yard surrounded by large shade trees. This was 130-138 West Center Street. George Wiggan was an uncle to Matilda Ellis, the second wife of Samuel Parmley. The opening of the Wiggan mining operation brought the Parmley family to Mahanoy City. Samuel Parmley conducted a general store at Center and Catawissa Streets and his home was in the rear on Catawissa Street.

Boston Run Colliery was conducted by several men from Boston, Massachusetts. Focht and Allen operated it in 1862. Three years later it was operated by Althouse and brother. Reese Tasker was superintendent here for many years. John Skeath was inside foreman and J.W. Madenfort was outside foreman in 1880.

Hill's Colliery, now known as Mahanoy Colliery, was owned by Hill and Harris. Charles Hill was superintendent as well as owner. He came from Pottsville and resided at 113 South Main Street in a very large, beautiful home. He lived in our borough for several years. The first coal was shipped in 1862, the veins operated were Primrose, Skidmore, and Mammoth. This was one of the earliest collieries in the Mahanoy Valley.

Silliman's Colliery, later known as North Mahanoy Colliery, was the second mine to be opened in the vicinity. Samuel and Edward W. Silliman, Sr. came from Pottsville to this borough in 1861. Alexander S. Fister, cousin of Edward S. and nephew of Samuel Silliman, was outside foreman. He lived at Stony Point on West Spruce Street. The first shipment of coal was made in 1861. The original breaker was destroyed by fire in 1869. That year the Sillimans sold it to Hill, Harris and Rumble who built the present colliery.

Bowman's Colliery, later known as Copley Colliery, was opened in the spring of 1862. The Bowman brothers, Peter, Jonas, and David, came from Parryville, Carbon County, Pennsylvania to operate this mine. Peter Bowman had been engaged in coal mining near Tamaqua since 1849 and was therefore an experienced operator. He sank the Newkirk slope which was the second slope to be sunk in Schuylkill County in 1849. The village around the colliery had fifteen houses. William Davidson was inside foreman, Gottfreid Reidinger was blacksmith, and John Snyder was foreman of the stables. The original workings were six drifts. The shaft was sunk on the Buck Mountain vein. Peter Bowman lived on East Center Street (the site of the Post Office and Elks building) and his brother, Jonas, lived next to him (the site of Schertzinger's Jewelry Store). David Bowman lived at the corner of Main and Mahanoy Streets.

Shoemaker's Colliery, later known as West Lehigh Colliery, was operated by a man named Shoemaker from Trenton, N.J. It was located where the village of Trenton now stands. This was in 1864. In 1870 he sold it to Bedford & Co. In 1874 Fisher Hazard became the owner. Mark D. Bowman was superintendent and Robert J. Bowman was outside foreman. There were twenty-four tenement houses connected with this colliery.

Park Place was known as the "Welsh" colliery because it was owned and operated by Welshmen David Reynolds, J. Roberts, and Richard Phillips. It was opened in 1872. In 1877 they sold it to Lentz, Lilly, & Company.

Robinson Colliery was named for J.O. Robinson, a brother-in-law of the owner of the mine. He conducted a company store in conjunction with the colliery at 32 East Center Street.

Focht's Colliery, later known as Schuylkill Colliery, was opened in 1863 by Abraham Focht who commenced shipping coal in the spring of 1864. The colliery was sold in 1865 to the firm of Focht, Whittaker, & Company who operated it until 1877 when it passed into the hands of the Philadelphia & Reading Coal & Iron Company. In the early days, Rees Price was foreman and William Watkins was also foreman at this colliery.

Buck Mountain Colliery was opened in 1883 by William Spencer of Minersville, who was also superintendent of the mine. The employees came from "old Buck Mountain" near Weatherly, Pa. to work in this newly opened mine. They called it Buck Mountain in memory of the old home place where they had worked. The families who came to Mahanoy City when this mine was opened were the Lowe, Coll, Trimble, Gilsion, Ryan, Quinn, Hanlon, Breslin, Fowler, Herron, Bernard O'Donnell, Michael Myers, Charles Woodrow, and William Welsh families. Later in the '90's the Griffith, Kline and Comleys families lived here.

Vulcan Colliery was opened about 1900. James Reese was superintendent here for many years. Michael Myers and Conrad Dresch, Jr. were foreman at one time. The breaker was built under the supervision of William Underwood, a mining engineer. The mine was abandoned about 1930.

New Boston Colliery was opened in 1864 by a party of Capitalists from Boston, Massachusetts, hence the name. Charles Hovey of Boston was the first superintendent. Coal shipments were made in 1865 and continued until 1871. This company was succeeded by the Broad Mountain and Lehigh Company who operated here until 1873 when a reorganization was affected under the name of the Middle Lehigh Company. In 1878 John Hitch leased the colliery. In 1880 Asa Packer and Eugene Delano were the proprietors. Murphy and Henry Kanute were inside foremen. The Lattimore family have been connected with this colliery and store for many years. Thomas Belville was superintendent at the store. William Comley and Harry Gerber were clerks. The Patterson and Kline families were also employed here. Morgan Beddow has been here many years. The village of New Boston contains about fifty houses.

Mill Creek, east of New Boston Colliery afterwards became known as the Mill Creek Coal Company.

Morea Colliery was known as "old" Boston breaker in the early days and was owned by Asa Packer and Eugene Delano. It was later called Morea about 1893. Daniel Thomas, who later became senator from this district, was superintendent in the '90's.

Primrose Colliery, later known as Steele's, was opened in 1862 by Steele and Patterson, who operated it until 1866, when Caleb Kneavles purchased the mine. The veins worked were the Primrose, Mammoth and Skidmore. At one time James Wynn was superintendent, William Wynn was outside foreman, and Frank F. Reed was shipper. At a later date, John Williams was inside foreman and John Pfleuger was outside foreman.

Elmwood Colliery was opened in 1871 at a point opposite the Grant Iron Works (the old foundry), the site of what is now known as Foundry Row. The operators of this colliery were Ralph R. Lee and Thomas and George Wren, three men from Pottsville. They erected a breaker with machinery at the cost of \$85,000 and operated it until 1874 when they sold out to the Philadelphia & Reading Coal & Iron Company. Ralph R. Lee lived at 408-412 East Center Street in a large brick residence with a lawn to the east. George Wren lived at 214 West Mahanoy Street in a similar residence with a lawn at the side. Thomas Wren, his father, never resided in our borough.

Lanigan's, Fowler's, Jackson's and Maple Hill were in the same neighborhood which seemed nearer to Shenandoah than Mahanoy City, but the people were very closely allied to our town. Lanigan's later became known as Ellangowan, named for the wife of Franklin E. Gowan, president of the Philadelphia & Reading Coal & Iron Company. At Ellangowan the St. Aiden's Roman Catholic Church was erected after the World War.

Maple Hill is a more recent colliery than its neighbors. It was erected about 1890 and is midway between Ellangowan and Suffolk. The Central breaker of steel construction is close to Maple Hill Colliery. This was erected about 1932.

Fowler's, later known as Knickerbocker Colliery, was opened in 1864 by M.P. Fowler and Henry Kuhn. The first shipments of coal were made November 23, 1864. In 1865 the colliery was sold to the Knickerbocker Coal Company of New York City of which Isaac Hayes, the great Arctic explorer, was president. It became a Philadelphia & Reading colliery in January 1873. The village adjacent to the breaker was known as Fowler's but is now called Yatesville. There is a Union church in this village.

Jackson's Colliery was operated by Henry Jackson who also had a store at 137-139 West Center Street.

P.J. Barry also operated a coalmine known as Barry's Colliery near Barry's Junction. He also had a store in connection with the mines at 17 West Center Street.

Glendon Colliery, formerly known as Lawton's Colliery, was opened in 1861 by Abram Pott who built a small breaker in 1862. In 1863 the mine was sold to Alfred Lawton who build a larger breaker. Mr. Bensinger was superintendent when Alfred Lawton owned the colliery. The colliery was sold to James B. Boylan in 1866 and he operated it until 1876. Joseph Seligman was superintendent at this time. In 1876 the Delano Land Company took possession of it,

leasing the mine to J.C. Hayden & Company. This company was composed of J.C. Hayden of Jeansville, Pa., Francis Robinson of York, Pa., and Dr. Thomas N. Patterson of Summit Hill. The last mentioned moved to Mahanoy City and assumed managership. For thirty years the Patterson family continued interested this mine. [sic] The veins mined were the Sevenfoot, Buck Mountain, and Skidmore. The little village known as Lawton's or Glendon near Pleasant Hill picnic ground, had nine houses. The palmer, Goyne, Richardsons, Entwistle, Noakes families lived near the colliery. William Palmer Sr. was inside foreman, John Goyne Sr. was superintendent. Later James McCabe was outside foreman. William P. Daniels was superintendent, Samuel Patterson was clerk and John Tucker was fire boss.

Craig's Patch. Some people have the impression that there was a colliery named Craig's. Near the village or "patch" called Hill's there lived a family named Craig. Mr. Craig held the position of foreman at the colliery and lived in this little settlement which eventually became known as Craig's.