

OUR INDUSTRIES

MINING IN POLAND TOWNSHIP

One of the chief industries to flourish in the Mahoning Valley was the mining of limestone and coal deposits primarily in the Lowellville and Poland Township Areas.

The first stack in the Mahoning Valley to use bituminous coal was built in 1845-1846. The Pence, Moore, Arrel, McCombs and Johnson quarries were extensively used in these earlier years. The Bessemer Limestone Company was then organized in 1887, the Arrel Limestone Company in 1893, and the Carbon Limestone Company in 1894. All were large and profitable producers.

But about a century later, the scope of mining, particularly strip mining-in Poland Township, was about to be challenged - a challenge that would continue for the next half of the 20th century.

In 1949, a petition was filed that alleged coal mining would constitute a public nuisance to rural residential areas that were adjacent or abutting a proposed mining operation in the Clingan Road and Algonquin area.. At a subsequent election, a zoning ordinance for the unincorporated area was adopted prohibiting the mining of coal.

In 1964, the issue of strip mining on the land on Arrel Road, zoned for agricultural use, was again questioned when the Marshall Mining Company requested a variance to mine the property owned by the Arrel Company. The residents circulated petitions against mining in their neighborhood and the variance was denied.

Browning Ferris Industries, an international waste disposal company, ultimately purchased the old Carbon Limestone quarry for the development of a sanitary landfill, and in the 1950's purchased a section of the Arrel property to use as a buffer zone adjacent to its landfill site. The mining rights were retained by Carbon Limestone and the Arrel family.

In 1995, Browning Ferris Industries purchased the last of the Arrel property on Moore Road from the Arrel descendent of California.



Browning Ferris Carbon Limestone Landfill



Essroc Mining on Moore Road

In 1990, the descendants of the Arrel family in California sold off their remaining mineral rights to Essroc Materials, Inc.. From this site until 1992, Essroc re-mined the limestone quarry with bigger equipment that mined deeper for the limestone, to be used for cement manufacturing. Essroc then sought to expand to a vein west of Moore Road.. Company officials said 5 million tons of limestone would be removed over a five-to seven-year period. To do this, Essroc officials petitioned Mahoning County Commissioners to vacate parts of Moore and Cowden roads south of U. S. Route 224.

As in earlier arguments, residents in the area objected, claiming the proposed project would degrade property values, disturb wetlands adjacent to the mining site, and disrupt their lives with more dust and noise. More importantly, it would set a precedent that would be detrimental to the future of the Township

Essroc, in turn, approached the Mill Creek Park Metropolitan District and proposed to convert the finished mining site into a 161-acre golf, baseball and soccer park, which would become part of the Park district if Moore and Cowden roads were permanently vacated. Part of the land, which contains the Essroc mineral rights, was purchased from the Arrel family descendants in the summer of 1995 by B. F. I. to use as a buffer.

A series of rulings and appeals continued over the next three years:

-The Poland Township Trustees denied Essroc's first request to relocate parts of Moore Road and Cowden Road

-Mahoning County Commissioners David Engler, Frank Lordi and Thomas Carney granted Essroc's request to vacate portions of Moore and Cowden Roads

-The Poland Township zoning board then rejected the company's conditional use permit to mine the land

-Township residents filed an appeal with the State Appeals Board on the commissioners ruling to vacate the roads

-The Appeals Board turned down the residents' petition

-Essroc files an appeal to overturn the denial for a conditional use permit

-Essroc's motion to dismiss was denied by The Court of Appeals of Ohio Seventh District.

-The Court overruled Essroc's motion to dismiss the appeal and granted the Township's motion for a stay of the Common Pleas Court judgment..

IRON MAKING

James and Daniel Heaton erected the first blast furnace in the Mahoning Valley -- and the first west of the Allegheny River -- in 1802 on Yellow Creek, near its conjunction with the Mahoning River, about 500 feet north of the dam forming Lake Hamilton. The furnace was a square structure, about twenty feet high, and the base was about fourteen feet long on each side. Three sides were made of stone found on the ground in the area, and the fourth side was formed by a steep bluff, against which the stack was built, with the dual purpose of saving labor and furnishing a way by which charcoal, limestone and ores could be hauled to the top. The interior was roughly lined with slabs of stone and on one side, about a foot from the bottom, there was an opening through which the molten iron was dipped out with ladles. The blast furnace consisted of a wooden tank, with one opening at the top and another opening that was lower and to the side, which was known as a "trompe." Water from Yellow Creek was conducted into the top of this tank. As the water rushed into the tank, it carried with it considerable amounts of air. The air rose through the water and formed a continuous pressure for the blast. Although the apparatus required careful designing and a steady stream of a large volume of water, neither seemed to have been available.

The furnace never worked properly and was in use for only a brief time. The Heaton brothers parted company after two years. Daniel bought out James' share and later improved the furnace, rebuilding it. The rebuilt furnace was named "Hopewell," and was used for about six years, producing two to three tons of iron per week. This iron was used to manufacture cast iron utensils, stoves, and similar articles that were used by the local townsfolk and the farmers. This old furnace was abandoned in 1812.

About a mile north of the Heaton stack, a second blast furnace was located on Yellow Creek. About 1805, Robert Montgomery contracted with John Struthers to obtain land for a furnace site, including the wooded land for the manufacture of charcoal, and the supply of ore obtained from deposits in the bed of the stream, as well as along the banks of the creek at points where the ore had been uncovered by the action of the water.



The first Iron Furnace west of the Allegheny Mountains, built by Gideon Hughes and operated by the father of former President William McKinley

LIMESTONE

In its last days, the Pennsylvania and Ohio Canal -- or the short stretch of the waterway that remained -- was used exclusively for hauling limestone from Lowellville to points in the upper Mahoning Valley area. When the railroads were built in the valley, the canal was abandoned in 1872.

In earlier years, the Pence, Moore, Arrel, and McCombs and Johnson quarries, were all worked extensively. The Bessemer Limestone Company was organized in 1887, the Arrel Limestone Company in 1893, and the Carbon Limestone Company in 1894; these were the largest limestone producers. From quarrying limestone, activities in this field branched out with the organization of the Bessemer Limestone and Cement Company in 1919. This company was a large producer of limestone for blast furnace and foundry flux, limestone for road work, asphalt filler, and pulverized limestone for agriculture use.

On November 7, 1983, operations at the Carbon Limestone Company had ceased after its properties near Lowellville were turned over by Picands Mather & Co. to SME Limestone Co. The shutdown idled nearly 100 employees. Pickands Mather had disclosed plans to sell the operation, apparently reflecting the sharp decline of the need in this area for blast furnace fluxing stone.

SME Limestone is a sister company of SME Bessemer, Inc., which acquired the Bessemer Limestone Company's nearby cement plant some time ago. The Carbon Quarries, which had been worked since the late 1890s, were expected to be a reserve supply of limestone for the cement plant.