

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Name of Property

County and State

Section number _____ Page _____

Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 15000449

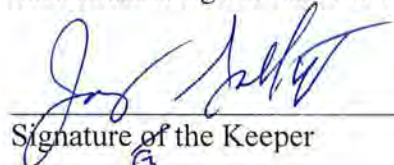
Date Listed: 7/21/2015

Property Name: Ravenscroft Mine

County: Putnam and White

State: TN

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper

8-11-2015
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 1: Name

The name of the property is hereby changed to "Ravenscroft Mine." The original nomination inadvertently left the "s" out. ✓

Section 2: Location

The property is located in both Putnam and White counties. Putnam County was inadvertently left off of the form.

The Tennessee State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file**
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**

JUN - 5 2015

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions on the back of this form. **Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.** If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name Ravencroft Mine

Other names/site number Peerless Mine; Bon Air Coal and Iron Corporation; Tennessee Products Corporation at Ravenscroft; White County Old Ravenscroft Mine Preserve

Name of related multiple property listing N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & Number: Glade Creek Rd

City or town: Sparta State: Tennessee County: White

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: Zip Code: 38583

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:
 national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

Claudia A. Stapp 5/24/15
Signature of certifying official/Title: **Date**
 Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting Official: **Date**

Title: **State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register

other (explain) _____

[Handwritten Signature]
 Signature of the Keeper

7-21-2015
 Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/EXTRACTION/extractive
facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor
recreation

LANDSCAPE/conservation area

LANDSCAPE/forest

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

NO STYLE

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

STONE; CONCRETE; BRICK

Narrative Description

(The Narrative Description contains excerpts from the following technical report: Technical Description, The Peerless Mine at Ravenscroft, White County, Tennessee by William C. Colley, Jr. and Dr. Francis O. Otuonye dated August, 2014.)

The Ravenscroft Mine site is located north and east of Sparta (pop. 5,100, 2013), in White County, Tennessee. The abandoned mine served as the only shaft coal mine in the area. The property totals an area of approximately 22.02 acres, with an access easement of 3.02 acres dividing the area. The main entrance, now a dirt road, is all that remains of the rail bed that ran through the property. The mine is surrounded by private farmland and woods with Glade Creek Road bounding the south edge.

The rock strata that comprise the Cumberland Plateau have long been known to include one or more seams of bituminous coal. Small-scale mining for local consumption had been done since around 1836, but mining on a commercial scale did not begin until arrival of the railroad on the plateau in 1887. The mining undertaken at that time consisted of drift mines, dug horizontally through the coal seam from its outcrop at

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the edge of the plateau. The Cumberland Plateau is vast, however, and much of its coal remained out of reach of these audits.

About 1901 the Bon Air Coal & Iron Co. began sinking two mine shafts to access coal at a distance from the edge of the plateau: one at Corolla, south of the town of Bon Air, and another, named Peerless Mine. The company town associated with the latter was named Ravenscroft, for reasons lost to memory. By 1904, the Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis (NC&StL) railway had extended its line to Ravenscroft, and production began.

Ravenscroft was in operation from 1904 until its closing in 1936. This thirty-two year period saw astounding progress in technology, spurred by World War I. In the beginning, there were no paved roads, and no motor vehicles to use them. Power was produced by steam or water. Mass transit consisted of the railroad, with steam locomotives. By the end of the period, gasoline-powered automobiles, buses and trucks sped on two-lane hard surface highways.

CURRENT SITE DESCRIPTION

When Ravenscroft Mine ceased operation in 1936, all equipment was removed and sold for scrap and salvage. The shafts themselves were filled. Today, the only physical evidence of the mine consists of concrete and stone building foundations and machine bases, and a slate dump.

The present roadway to the mine site is known to have been the railroad right-of-way. All rails and ties were removed in 1937 (*see Photos 2 & 6*).

The most prominent feature seen at the mine site is a monolithic concrete tower (*see Photos 7-11*). It has large bolts set in its top for machine mounting, a slot near the top in the side opposite the railroad, and beam pockets near ground level on the side near the railroad.

To the east of the monolith is a building foundation with a row of paired machine bases (*see Photos 11-14 & 20*) The southwest pair has circular segment cutouts in the outer sides of both blocks, as though clearance was provided for rotating machinery. This pair is aligned with the slot in the monolith (*see Photo 11*).

At the northeast end of this building is an area with a pit and anchor bolts that could have been the site of a boiler and chimney (*see Photos 15-18*).

The mine site ruins include numerous small building foundations, including a few with heavy concrete walls (*see Photo 19-20*).

The slate dump was on the northwest side of the railroad, across from the monolith (*see Photos 4-5*). Some slate has been “borrowed” for local driveway paving. No red dog (coal slag) has been found here. “Slate” is a mine term for any shale or slate accompanying coal. No archaeological excavation has been done. Adjacent and to the south of the slate dump is a small crescent-shaped lake.

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MINE REPORTS (*Annual Reports of the Tennessee Department of Labor-Division of Mines*)

The earliest report in the collection is believed to be from about 1904:

WHITE COUNTY.
RAVENSROFT MINE.

Owner and operators : Bon Air Coal & Iron Company, Nashville, Tenn. John P. Williams, President, Nashville, Tenn.; C. Cooper, Secretary, Nashville, Tenn.: J. M. Overton, General Manager, Nashville, Tenn.; J. L. Dibrell, Manager Bon Air Division, Bon Air, Tenn. W. D. Hardeman, Superintendent, Ravenscroft, Tenn.; John Hannigan, Mine Foreman, Ravenscroft, Tenn.

This is a shaft coal mine, in class "C." situated at Ravenscroft, 7 miles east of Bon Air, on Cumberland Mountain, and is reached by N., C. & St. L. Ry. The seam worked here has a thickness of 48 inches, with sand rock roof and fire clay bottom. The mine is developed on the double entry room and pillar system. Ventilation is produced with CaPelle fan 10 feet in diameter. The current is conducted through mine by the split system. The coal is handled with mules from rooms to bottom of hoisting shaft and elevated to surface by hoisting engine. Depth of shaft, 178 feet. Average number of men employed, 54. Average temperature of mine, 63 degrees. Area under development large. Conditions good.

A subsequent report was made while Bon Air Coal and Iron Co. was in receivership, *The Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Mining Department*, published in 1914:

Ravenscroft Mine — *Owner*, Bon Air Coal & Iron Co., Nashville; *Operator*, Robert Vaughn and E. C. Lewis, Receivers, Nashville; *Superintendent*, W. F. Dibrell, Bon Air; *Inside Foreman*, George Thom, Jr., Ravenscroft.

This is a Class C shaft mine, operating in the Bon Air seam, which has an average thickness of 54 inches, and an elevation of 1,879 feet above sea level. It is located at Ravenscroft, and connects with N. C. & St. L. Ry. Generally, the roof is sandstone, but in some sections of the mine the coal is overlaid with a draw slate, varying in thickness from 3 to 10 inches. It is developed on the double entry, double room and pillar system. Most of the coal is undercut with compressed air mining machines of the puncher type, and broken down with black powder. This is in general a very wet mine, and requires 18 pumps of various sizes going to keep the water out. Ventilation is produced by a 10-foot Capelle exhaust fan, with steam connections, and is distributed through the development by the split system. An average of 133 men and 17 mules are employed on the inside. Haulage is conducted from rooms and other working places to sidetrack by mules; and from sidetrack to cage landing, a distance of 1,300 feet, by main and tail rope; and from cage landing at bottom of shaft to top, a distance of 187 feet, by steam hoist.

In the last report of the collection, the Ravenscroft mine was the only mine still operating in White County. Tennessee Products Corporation had been formed in 1926, absorbing Bon Air Coal & Iron Corporation.

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WHITE COUNTY

Ravenscroft Mine

Owner, **Tennessee Products Corporation**..... Nashville
Operator, **Tennessee Products Corporation** Ravenscroft
President, **Fredric Leake** Nashville
Secretary, **Alvin Foster** Nashville
Superintendent, **W. W. Gilbreath**.....Bon Air
Inside Foreman, **Harry Chittick**.....Bon Air

This is a class "C" shaft mine, located 1,875 feet above sea level, in Cumberland Mountain, 13 miles from Sparta, and connects with N., C. & St. L. Railroad.

The Ravenscroft seam, having an average thickness of 50 inches, is worked. The roof is sandstone, and the bottom fire clay and slate. It is developed on the double entry, room and pillar system. Ventilation is produced by fan with a diameter of 5 feet and is distributed by the split system.

Haulage is conducted from 13 and 14 West to cage, a distance of 7,700 feet, by motors; from 12 West to cage, a distance of 7,300 feet, by motors; from 4 East to cage, a distance of 7,800 feet, by motor; from main South to cage, a distance of 8,100 feet, by motors; from 5 and 6 East to cage, a distance of 8,200 feet, by motors; from North right to cage, a distance of 2,600 feet, by mules, to main East side track.

DESCRIPTON and DEFINITIONS OF A SHAFT MINE

Shaft

The vertical shaft was dug to connect the surface to the coal seam below. Actually, two parallel shafts were sunk: One accommodated the elevator "cage," by which men, mules and tools were raised and lowered, loaded coal cars transported to the surface, and empty cars returned below. Fresh air flowed into the mine through this shaft. The other was the ventilation shaft, from which stale air was drawn from the mine by a large steam-powered fan. The depth of the coal seam from the surface was 178 feet; other dimensions of the shafts have not been determined.

The main shaft is thought to have been in proximity to the monolithic tower shown in (*see Photo 11*), and at a point on the layout map, (*see Figure 44*), near the railroad where the entry seems to have a siding. The exact locations of the main and vent shafts are not in evidence. According to legends, after the mine closed, remaining unoccupied miners were allowed credit toward their housing rent by Tennessee Products Co. in exchange for filling the abandoned shafts.

Adits

Adits (blind horizontal tunnels) dug through the coal seam were called "entries." This terminology stems from drift mines, where the seam is entered horizontally from an outcrop on the mountainside. The Ravenscroft Mine was designed on the double entry system, where each entry is paired with a parallel adit called the air course, which connected to the vent shaft. As excavation proceeds, crossover passages are dug periodically between the entries to enable stale air to return to the vent shaft. Partitions ("brattices") and doors are erected in these passages, so that only the one near the working face is open.

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Rooms

Additional coal was removed from side passages called “rooms.” The rooms were separated by unexcavated pillars, whose purpose was to support the mountain above.

The double entry room and pillar design is evident on the layout map (*see Figure 44*). The roof or “top” of the entries and rooms posed a constant danger. The plateau at this elevation is all sedimentary, and seldom firmly cemented. The composition of the top varied from “sandrock” (sandstone), which could be sound or not, to “draw rock” (slate), which always required removal or support by timbers. The passages had to be wide enough to pass a mine car, and tall enough to accommodate a mule. The narrative of Appendix A refers to room widths of 21 feet and 42 feet. The allowable width of a room may have been related to the quality of the top and the strength of the pillars.

Generally, the coal seams were horizontal, but there were troublesome exceptions. The plateau has been subjected to tectonic forces over the eons, resulting in some parts being tilted. In at least one case (*see Appendix A*) the resulting slope was too steep for mules or motors to tow the cars, and a winch and cable had to be used, raising costs. Several of the entries encountered faults and had to be abandoned. The fault is a vertical crack in which the strata on one side are displaced vertically relative to the other.

Ventilation

Ventilation of the mine was of critical importance, not only to supply breathing air to the miners, but to dilute, render harmless, and carry away accumulations of dangerous toxic or flammable gases.

The ventilation shaft was surmounted by a building containing a ten-foot diameter, steam-driven fan which exhausted spent air from the mine. The foundation of this building has not been positively identified, but the vent shaft is thought to have been northeast of the main shaft, at the end of the narrow adit leading off the air course (*see Figure 44*). The fan house may have been the building labeled “Pump” on the railroad track map (*see Figure 24-26*).

Drainage

The Ravenscroft Mine was known to be a wet mine. Rainwater permeated the sandstone strata overlying the coal seam, dripping from the tops of rooms and entries. Gravity drainage was impossible, so troughs were dug in the floors to conduct the water to sumps, from which constant pumping was required. Appendix B lists two centrifugal pumps driven by 75hp 440-volt 3-phase electric motors at the “big pump station,” plus 17 smaller electric pumps. Some of the entries were over a mile long, and the seam was not always level, so collection of all water in a single sump would have been impractical. As pump failure was potentially catastrophic, the pumps were probably deployed in redundant pairs. The mine was 172 feet deep, so a pump pressure of about 75psi would have been required to lift water to the surface. Most pumps were electric and were powered by generators in the power plants (*see Figure 10*).

In the correspondence of Dr. Young (*see Appendix A*), there is one mention of electric cables routed to the pumps through drill holes.

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Loosening and loading

The cycle of operation at the working face was as follows:

- The coal seam was drilled, using hand augers at first, and later pneumatic jackhammers.
- The seam was then undercut, using hand picks at first, and later pneumatic mining machines of the “puncher type” (possibly the jackhammers). Pneumatic tools would have required an air compressor in the power house.
- The drilled holes were charged with blasting powder.
- When detonated, the blast fragmented the coal.
- Before proceeding, the space was ventilated to disperse gases released by the shot. Booster fans were used when appropriate.
- The loose coal was then loaded into waiting mine cars (*see Figures 15, 17, 20*). Coal ready to load was said to be “shot down.” The miner responsible for each car attached a metal identification tag to it, so that he would receive credit when the car was weighed.
- The cycle was repeated.

Transporting to surface

The loaded mine car was moved on a track from the room into the entry by mules. The track leading into the room was at a right angle to the track in the entry, so the car, weighing at least a half-ton, would have been rotated ninety degrees in little space. The technique for doing this is unknown.

In the entry, several loaded cars were coupled together, and the string moved to the elevator cage. Early on, when the entries were short, this haulage was done by mules. As the entries became longer, the mules were replaced by “main and tail rope.” This technique is unfamiliar, but may have resembled that of San Francisco cable cars.

At some point, electric locomotives, “motors,” were introduced for long hauls (*see Figure 15*). This likely happened when the mine was modernized following rescue from bankruptcy in 1917. Some entries were over a mile in length by this time.

At the main shaft, the cars were loaded, perhaps one at a time, into the elevator cage and hoisted to the surface (*see Figure 19*). The evidence suggests that the monolithic tower was associated with the elevator hoist, possibly supporting a large pulley above the shaft, with cables leading to hoisting machinery located in the power house, some distance from the tower. The hoist was steam-powered, and had provision for braking the cage on its return to the shaft bottom. In addition to mine cars, the cage also transported miners, mules, and equipment. It is said that the mules were kept in a barn in the mine, brought to the surface on Friday evening for a weekend in sunshine, then returned to the mine on Sunday evening.

Weighing

The evidence suggests that the loaded cars were not lifted to the top of the tibble by the same hoist that raised them to the surface. The tibble tower is of open truss work. The monolith, if associated with the tibble tower, would be visible in the photos. It is likely that the main shaft and the monolith were in one of the side buildings of the tibble structure, protected from weather. If this was the case, the loaded cars would have moved horizontally from the shaft to the base of the tibble tower, perhaps passing over the scale.

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At the scale, each car was weighed, the numbered metal tag attached by the miner who loaded it was noted, and the coal recorded and credited to him. Loaded railroad cars departing the mine were weighed by the NC&StL at their scale in DeRossett.

Cleaning

The coal seam was overlaid with loosely cemented sandstone, shale and slate. Contamination of the coal by pieces of this stone was unavoidable. Some stone was removed while loading the car, but working conditions at the coal face were not ideal for this. It seems likely that the car was dumped onto a table or conveyor, possibly at the top of the tipple, where the coal was spread out and contaminants picked out by hand.

In some places, where the top of the mine had to be raised to provide working headroom, cars filled with only slate would have emerged from the mine. Slate from all sources was eventually transported to the slate dump across the tracks. The photos show no conveyor crossing the tracks, so it is presumed that mule-drawn wagons, and later, motor trucks, were employed to haul the slate.

A wagon loading chute can be seen in Figure 3. This chute may have been used for slate, or it may have been to divert coal for use in the mine boilers, or both.

Sorting

Within the tipple structure, the coal was graded by size. This was accomplished by passing the coal over two sloping, shaken screens (*see Figure 9*). The upper screen had smaller holes, which allowed slack coal (one inch lumps down to fines) to pass, falling into a waiting railroad car. Coal retained by the upper screen fell onto the second screen, which had larger openings. The coal passed by this screen fell into a second gondola car. The lump coal retained by the second screen fell into a third gondola car (*see Photo 8*). The track map (*see Figures 24-26*), shows three sidings passing under the tipple, plus a fourth track bypassing it.

Transport to market

Loaded gondola cars were taken by the NC&StL to its marshaling yard at DeRossett, two miles distant (*see Figure 7*). There the cars were weighed for billing purposes, and trains assembled, destined to intersect the main Nashville to Chattanooga line at Tullahoma.

Power

All power was generated on-site by coal-fired steam boilers and reciprocating engines. Direct power was required to operate the hoists, vent fans, pumps, tipple, and air compressors. Electric power was generated by steam-driven generators, and used for pumps, motors, winches, and for illumination. It is likely that the steam plant was of the closed cycle type, as those are more efficient than open cycle plants, and less subject to boiler scale from constant addition of makeup water. In addition to the water pumped from the mine, quantities of water were supplied to the mine from nearby Buck Creek Lake, perhaps enough to cool a condenser.

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CONCLUSION

A newspaper article published March 1, 1937 in the *Pittsburg Post-Gazette* told of 50 carloads of surplus machinery, removed from the closed Ravenscroft Mine at Ravenscroft, which were destined for a salvage yard in Chattanooga. The problem was that the railroad had been given permission to abandon the trackage to Ravenscroft, so no permit could be issued to a railroad that no longer existed. The article focused on bureaucratic buffoonery, but the tragic aspect, from our perspective, was that the 50 carloads of “junk” that, presumably, eventually made its way to Chattanooga were relics that would have greatly aided our interpretation of the remaining evidence of the Ravenscroft Mine.

We have attempted to define various tasks associated with extracting coal from a shaft mine on Cumberland Plateau, and proposed methods of accomplishing those tasks that would have been consistent with the available evidence. By this method we have generated a detailed description of the Ravenscroft Mine.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations N/A
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY

ENGINEERING

Period of Significance

1901-1936

Significant Dates

1901 (mine sunk)

1917 (acquisition by Bill Cummins)

1926 (merged into Tennessee Products Corp)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Comstock, Charles

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

Ravenscroft Mine is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its local significance in industry and engineering associated with the shaft coal mine industry in the Cumberland Plateau area of Tennessee during the period of significance of 1901 when the mine was sunk until 1936 when the mine ceased operation. The Ravenscroft Mine, also known as the Peerless Mine, is an important example of the industrial development and expansion in the early twentieth century of the American South. It is a significant reminder of the substantial impact the coal industry has had on the landscape of the Cumberland Plateau and on the lives of its inhabitants. As mining operations increased at the mine, a fully-functional company town emerged to support the miners and their families. The mine/industrial site alone is currently being nominated but the company town/community of Ravenscroft is such an integral part of the story of the Ravenscroft Mine that its history/historical narrative has been included in the nomination text. No archeological surveys of the mine site have been completed at this time but future investigation may lead to more information in regards to this site. The site of the Ravenscroft Mine has been donated to White County, TN, for development as a historic memorial park. The Ravenscroft Mine site features retains integrity from its historic period.

Narrative Statement of Significance

In 1902, the Bon Air Coal and Iron Company sank a shaft mine—a distinct break from the usual drift mines along the Cumberland Plateau, in eastern White County, Tennessee that was, “190 feet from tippie to bottom”.¹ Initially called “Peerless”, the coal mine soon became known as “Ravenscroft”, as did the small community built by the company. Ravenscroft was not the only mine the company operated in the Upper Cumberland; others included Clifty, Lyles, Allens Creek, Bon Air, Eastland, and Wrigley, named for the William Wrigley Jr., former owner of the Chicago Cubs and inventor of one of the nation’s favorite chewing gum. It would not be long, however, before the company, the new mine and its supervisors came under close scrutiny.

In 1903, Emil P. Follin and Gus Anderson, along with a group of forty-eight Danish miners, alerted the Kings Consul of Denmark concerning ill-treatment at the hands of their supervisors at Ravenscroft. Discontent had begun, however, before the foreign miners even arrived on site. The group was initially hired for the Bon Air Coal and Iron Company by P.K Jensen, a Norwegian agent responsible for, “securing Scandinavian laborers” to establish a Scandinavian community within the mining towns, according to correspondence found between Jensen and Jesse Overton, vice-president of the Company.² The plaintiffs claimed that Mr. Jensen promised them, “advance in travel money,” along with a raise and “good board.”³ None of these needs was met as promised; therefore, the plaintiffs claimed a breach of contract. The Scandinavian miners, however, faced a much larger problem once at Ravenscroft. Mr. Follin stated in reference to the work conditions, bodily punishments were given to at least ten of the undersigned, as an example, “ an old man, Swedish by birth, was, on account of the fact that he refused to work, he being sick, beaten and overpowered by the company’s hired police, who beated and kicked him so that he became

¹ *Bon Air Hustler*, “Ravenscroft Records,” (December 4, 1917).

² Governor James P. Frazier Papers (Nashville: Tennessee State Library and Archives, RG 33), 5.

³ Frazier, 5.

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ruptured, and so on, one was hit over the head with a chair on account of the act he did not know what way three man had gone that ran away.”⁴

The matter became of such great importance, it came not only to the attention of the Governor of Tennessee James B. Frazier, but U.S. Secretary of State, Elihu Root. The miners refused to work, believing they were justified in their actions, even though Jesse Overton stated to the Honorable Charles Earl Currie of the Royal Danish Consul, “We deny that any of them have been used roughly, or any of them have been forced into the mines at the point of revolvers or clubs.”⁵ Soon after, Currie implored R.A Shiflett, the Chief Mine Inspector for Tennessee to visit the site to see in person, the state in which these miners were supposedly living in. Shiflett refused however, believing the matter was out of his jurisdiction and subsequently passed the case on to the Attorney General of Tennessee, Charles T. Cates.⁶ Two years into the investigation, the matter remained unresolved, becoming a, “formal protest and complaint lodged with the United States by a foreign power.”⁷ It was not until this request from Governor Frazier that Shiflett agreed to take action. Governor Frazier’s correspondence regarding the matter ends in December 1905, with no definitive answers on the outcome of the case.

The Scandinavian community within the Bon Air mining towns seems to have been a failure, however it was not unusual in this period, for a company to seek out and employ immigrants. Ravenscroft also boasted a large Czechoslovakian population, and a cemetery remains nearby. Many African-Americans called Ravenscroft home as well, including the renowned journalist and political activist, Carl Rowan (*see Figure 37*).⁸

Many prominent Upper Cumberland and Middle Tennessee families were associated with Ravenscroft and the Bon Air Coal and Iron Company. After the consolidation of the Bon Air Coal Company and Buffalo Iron Company in 1902, Jesse M. Overton served as the vice-president and general manager, W.C. Dibrell, the son of the famous Confederate General George G. Dibrell, as secretary, and James McGavock Dickinson as a director.⁹ Dibrell’s grandson, W.F Dibrell, was one of the first mine superintendents at Ravenscroft, with George B. Thom Jr. as the acting foreman.¹⁰ One of the most prominent Nashville businessmen of the early 20th century, William Cummins, served on the Directors Board and was instrumental in the transition from the Bon Air Coal and Iron Company, to the Bon Air Coal and Iron Corporation in 1917.¹¹ Less than ten years later the Bon Air Coal and Iron Corporation merged with the Chattanooga Coke and Gas Company in 1926, forming the Tennessee Products Corporation. Dr. William Byrd, or “W.B” Young, a medical doctor and former mine supervisor (*see Figure 40*) became the, “vice-president and operator of the coal division”

⁴ Frazier, 6.

⁵ Frazier, “Correspondence between Charles Currie and J.M Overton, April 25, 1904.”

⁶ Frazier, “Correspondence between Charles Currie and R.A Shiflett, November 1, 1904.”

⁷ Frazier, “Correspondence between Governor Frazier and R.A Shiflett, December 6, 1905.”

⁸ Carl Rowan, was born in Ravenscroft and lived there till early childhood.

⁹ *The Iron Age Vol. LXX July-December, 1902*, “The Bon Air Coal & Iron Company” September 18, 1902, (New York: David Williams Company, 1902), 13.

¹⁰ George E. Sylvester, *State of Tennessee, Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Mining Department, Mineral Resources of Tennessee 1914*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Williams Printing Company, 1915), 19.

¹¹ *Standard Corporation Service, May-August, 1917*, (New York: Standard Statistics Company, Inc., 1917), 59.

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under this new reorganization.¹² Dr. Young presumably anticipated closure of the mine in 1934 when he assumed the position.

The operation at Ravenscroft was quite expansive, covering some twenty-five acres filled with numerous underground tunnels and rooms that produced up to a, “daily capacity of 800 tons”.¹³ The coal mined from Ravenscroft was, “a hard bituminous coal, containing some sulphur, and makes an especially good domestic fuel.”¹⁴ *The Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Mining Department*, published in 1914, reported the mine as being, “developed on the double entry, double room and pillar system,” with ventilation, “on the split system. . . produced by a 10-foot Capelle exhaust fan, propelled by steam.” Removing coal required the utilization of mules. “Haulage is conducted from rooms to sidetracks by mule; and from sidetracks to cage landing, a distance of 1,300 feet, by main and tails rope; and from cage landing at bottom of shaft to top, a distance of 187 feet, by steam hoist.” This same report cited, “an average of 100 men and 18 mules are employed on the inside work.”¹⁵ At times, the number of men employed in the mines reached 185.¹⁶

Coal mining was hard work, but often paid generously, compared to other occupations in the region. The region of eastern White County atop the Cumberland Plateau had largely been populated by subsistence farmers who eked out a living in an area with three inches or less of topsoil. Cattle grazing and logging provided better living conditions immediately after the Civil War. The advent of coal mining and iron production spread throughout the area after former Union General John T. Wilder, W. O. Rockwood, and Hiram Chamberlain established Roan Iron and the company town Rockwood in 1867. Between 1867 and 1900 dozens of logging, mining and iron operations were established in Campbell, Cumberland, Fentress, Grundy, Morgan, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, Rhea, Roane, Scott, Sequatchie, Van Buren, and White Counties. The transition from a rural, agrarian existence to an industrial base transformed the region over the span of two generations. Extractive industries provided steady pay, better housing conditions, and more access to finished goods than previously available. The transition proved disruptive for many longtime residents as immigrants moved into the region, and reliance on scrip rather than hard currency presented a challenge to the local economy.¹⁷ By 1917, however, miners employed by the Bon Air Coal and Iron Corporation received a pay increase to at least \$3.10 a day putting, “them in a class with skilled labor.”¹⁸ The average wage in White County for 1920 for a mineworker was around \$5.00 a day.¹⁹

World War I served as a boon to the community as demand for U.S. coal skyrocketed. The international market’s need for American coal increased throughout the war as European coal fields were abandoned or

¹² *Crossville Chronicle*, “Wonderful Work Being Done By Tennessee Products Corporation,” (August 18, 1932).

¹³ B.H Rose, *Coal Mines 1910*, (Cleveland, Ohio: B.H Rose, 1910), 167.

¹⁴ Wilbur A. Nelson, *The Southern Coalfield, included in Bledsoe, Cumberland, Franklin, Grundy, Hamilton, Marion, Putnam, Rhea, Sequatchie, Van Buren, Warren and White Counties*, (Nashville: Tennessee Department of Geology, 1925), 173.

¹⁵ George E. Sylvester, *State of Tennessee, Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Mining Department, Mineral Resources of Tennessee 1914*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Williams Printing Company, 1915), 95.

¹⁶ O.Proctor Pile, *State of Tennessee, Twenty-Seventh Annual Report of the Mining Department, Mineral Resources of Tennessee 1921*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Williams Printing Company, 1922), 49.

¹⁷ For an overview of how coal mining affected the region see: James B. Jones, Jr. *The Development of Coal Mining on Tennessee’s Cumberland Plateau* (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Commission, 1987) and Michael E. Birdwell, *The Stearns Coal Company, 1902-1975* (Cookeville, Tennessee: Upper Cumberland Humanities and Social Sciences Institute, 1988).

¹⁸ *Bon Air Hustler*, “Miners of Mountain Receive 14 Per Cent Increase,” (January 14, 1920).

¹⁹ O. Proctor Pile, *State of Tennessee, Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the Mining Department, Mineral Resources of Tennessee 1920*, (Nashville, Tennessee: Williams Printing Company, 1921), 86.

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endangered by the ongoing conflict. Original European demand favored anthracite from the coalfields in Pennsylvania, but as the war wore on, softer bituminous coal from Kentucky and Tennessee filled the holds of merchant ships headed to England and Germany until 1917 when the U.S. declared war on the Central Powers. Wartime production increased with American entry into the war, and coal miners received deferrals from military service because their occupations were deemed essential to allied victory.

At its height in the 1920s, the company town of Ravenscroft included a telegraph office, post office, train station, two schools, a general store, a Community Church, a Methodist church with a separate Sunday School, a brass boy's band, and a team in the company baseball league.²⁰ Company towns spent many a summer watching the baseball teams play friendly games against each other. Earl Webb, the record holder for "the most doubles hit in a single season", began his career playing on one of these company teams (*see Figure 40*).²¹ The summer season also witnessed arrival of many of the company's upper management and their families, to their mountain homes where they could relax far away from the hustle and bustle of Nashville and beyond. The Nashville, Chattanooga, and St. Louis Railway, (N.C.&St.L.) extended its tracks to Ravenscroft in 1903, running two passenger trains a day, and became the area's major mode of transportation.²² Decline in the need for passenger trains arose as the availability of the automobile grew and, "by 1928 only a single daily except Sunday round trip of mixed train maneuvered the branches to Ravenscroft and Clifty. On October 15, 1930, all passenger service was discontinued."²³ The train served as the life's blood of Ravenscroft for twenty-five years; the mine and town could not have achieved any significant success without it.

By the early 1930s the mine and town began a slow decline for a number of reasons. The Great Depression caused significant losses for investors, and economic uncertainties led to layoffs and a dwindling demand for soft coal. After the Carola closure, an operation near Ravenscroft that provided the electricity needed to operate the mine and town, engineers utilized, "the flow of water from the old abandoned mine under the bluff and found there was sufficient water, with 600 feet in elevation, below the water head to operate a small power plant at the foot of the mountain in Blue Spring Cove."²⁴ In 1932, the mine operated only two days per week and the company attempted to provide miners and their families other means of sustenance. The company set 460 acres aside for agricultural use. Men not working in the mines were employed on public service projects, like building a road to connect the company towns. Vanderbilt University even created a summer engineering school in 1932 on Bon Air property, in the former summer home of W.J Cummins.²⁵

The mine continued operation until April 30, 1936, when the corporation's leadership decided it was more trouble than it was worth.²⁶ The corporation allowed some men to stay as, "tenants at different points on the

²⁰ Each school served either white or African American students. For more on the school system, see Appendix.; *Bon Air Hustler*, "Ravenscroft Records," (December 4, 1917); *Bon Air Hustler*, "Ravenscroft Records," (April 1, 1918).

²¹ Bill Nowlin, "Earl Webb", <http://sabr.org/bioproj/person/79961264>.

²² *Boston Evening Transcript*, "Promoter of Industries," (April 16, 1903).; Elmer G. Sulver, *Ghost Railroads of Tennessee*, (Indiana University Press, 1998), 243.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Crossville Chronicle*, "Wonderful Work Being Done By Tennessee Products Corporation," (August 18, 1932). They utilized a Pelton Water Wheel that was, "12-inch in diameter ... with a 10 K.W generator."

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Personal Correspondence between Dr. Young and Jones, Mitchell, and Nason Law Firm, August 19, 1936.

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land for watchers and caretakers, even though they are unable to pay the company anything.”²⁷ It was the last shaft-mine in Tennessee, and one of only two mines still operated by the Tennessee Products Corporation. One reason that it could no longer be mined stemmed from substantial problems with water and flooding that it had had from its beginning. This is not surprising however, as coal acts as a natural aquifer. It became so severe in 1917, in reference to the absence of Ravenscroft section in the *Bon Air Hustler*, the Chief of Police in Ravenscroft, a Mr. Maddox, stated, “Them guys is so busy pumping the water out of the old mine, setting up their new engines, and digging coal to boot that they ain’t got no time to either write or read a newspaper.”²⁸ Lack of coal was not the issue with land surrounding Ravenscroft still holding, “between 4,000,000 and 5,000,000 tons of workable coal.”²⁹ The Tennessee Products Corporation was not keen on leaving much of the infrastructure in Ravenscroft either, “The company officials and doctor moved away, the commissary was closed, electricity, turned off – even the water has been retained only by quarterly appeals to the County Court. The railroad took up its rails and the station has been torn down. It is difficult to imagine anything more dreary than this dead town.”³⁰ In less than a year, a vibrant, busy town had been stripped of any means of surviving, and turned into a ghost town.

Many miners looked for work elsewhere and moved away, some moved into Cumberland County to participate in the New Deal Resettlement Program east of Crossville at the Cumberland Homesteads (NRHP-listed, 9/30/1988). This was not feasible for everyone; however, so a few families remained, eking a meager living off the company owned land:

Its public buildings are closed, a large number of houses are empty – and doors and windows have been removed. The streets are littered with debris left behind by those moving away, for over half the families have sought work elsewhere. However, 64 families remain, including 150 children. 40 of them under school age. A number of the heads of families are away at work and there seem to be no young men in the community.³¹

The 150 children caused the greatest concern because many of them fell ill due to malnutrition and typhus, with a few infants passing away.

The plight of the people who still called Ravenscroft home soon came to the attention to a group of humanitarians. They included Reverend Edwin E. White from Pleasant Hill, Dr. May Cravath Wharton of Uplands Sanatorium, Dr. Lillian Johnson from Memphis, along with Olive Myers, and Vivian Tenney. Together they tried to re-energize the people of Ravenscroft, and bring them out of destitution. The most pressing problem was the lack of proper care of the town’s children. Dr. Lillian Johnson, “enlisted the aid of friends in sending milk and cod liver oil for the children, and clothing, bed linens and other necessities for others.”³² Dr. Johnson and Olive Myers established, “the center of the activities and the heart of Ravenscroft – a clubhouse, recreations center, library, [and] office,” in the, “large house on the hill”.³³ In an effort to balance a rent debt, residents of Ravenscroft filled up the mine and one of the airshafts, per order of the

²⁷ Personal Correspondence, (August 25, 1936).

²⁸ *Bon Air Hustler*, “Ravenscroft Records,” (September 5, 1918).

²⁹ Personal Correspondence, *ibid.*

³⁰ “A Town is Dying in Tennessee Hills – Memphian Befriends Its Hungry People,” (July 17, 1937).

³¹ “64 Families Hang On,” (July 17, 1937).

³² Iris Webb Glebe, “Ravenscroft Recovery, 1936-1944,” 2.

³³ *Ibid.*, 1.

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Corporation.³⁴ Within four years the town flourished so much that it entered the “Better Home Week” contest for most attractive community, and won.³⁵ The largest problem remained however, in that residents of Ravenscroft were technically squatters, because the Tennessee Products Corporation owned all the land and property. The same group of humanitarians established the Ravenscroft Cooperative in an effort to negotiate with the corporation to buy the land.

³⁴ Ibid., 5.

³⁵ Ibid.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):		Primary location of additional data:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	State Historic Preservation Office
<input type="checkbox"/>	previously listed in the National Register	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other State agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	previously determined eligible by the National Register	<input type="checkbox"/>	Federal agency
<input type="checkbox"/>	designated a National Historic Landmark	<input type="checkbox"/>	Local government
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	University
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #	Name of repository: Tennessee Technological University	
Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):			

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 25.02 acres **USGS Quadrangle** De Rossett 332 NE

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| A. Latitude: 35.983433 | Longitude: -85.291032 |
| B. Latitude: 35.983435 | Longitude: -85.285306 |
| C. Latitude: 35.987329 | Longitude: -85.285018 |
| D. Latitude: 35.987329 | Longitude: -85.291154 |

Verbal Boundary Description

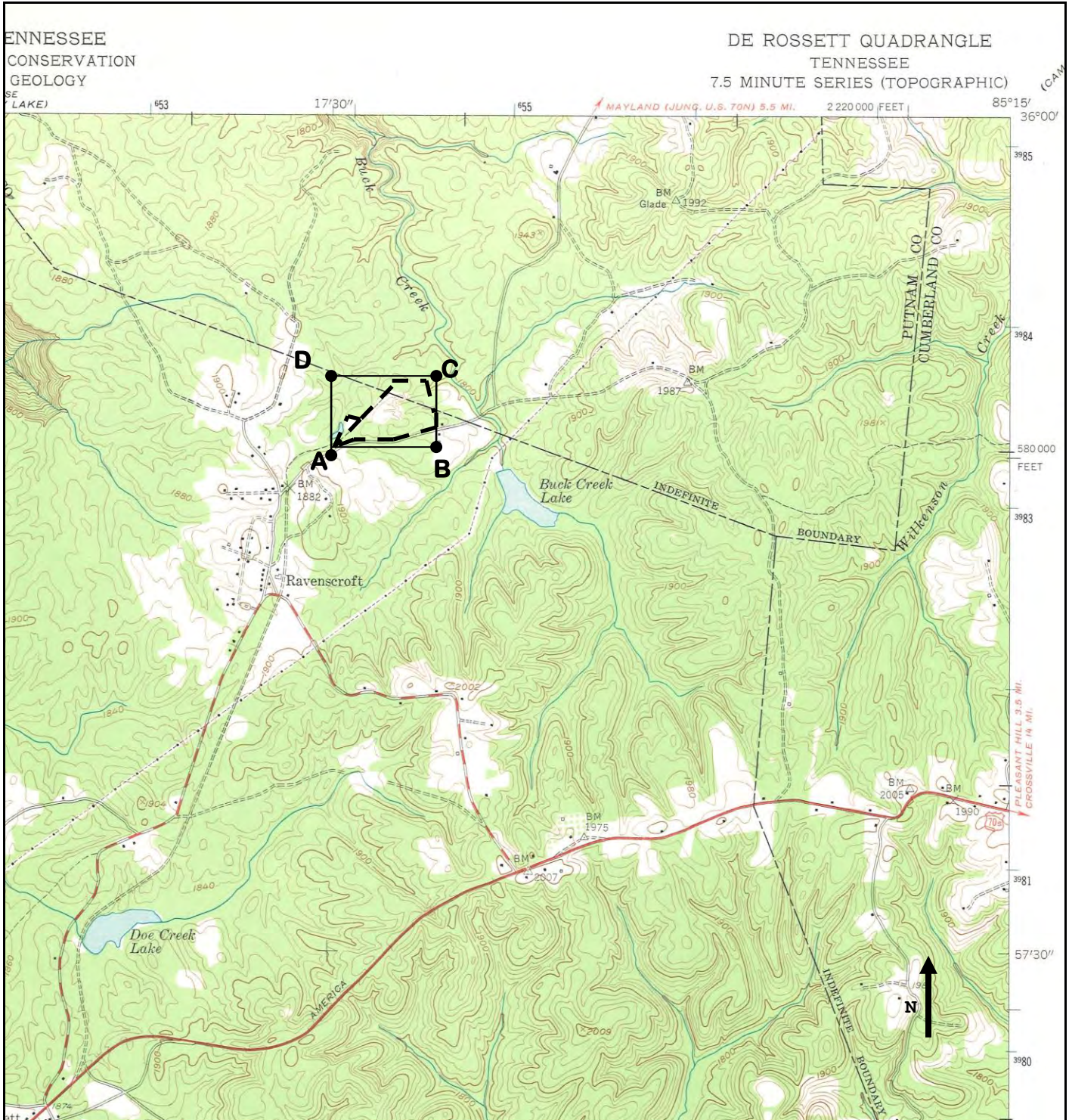
The discontinuous boundary for the Ravenscroft Mine site nomination encompasses approximately 25.02 acres of the overall mine site. Parcel 035 001.01 (25.02 acres) is currently owned by White County, Tennessee and is designated as the White County Old Ravenscroft Mine Preserve. The southwestern portion of the Parcel on the west side of the old railroad spur bed (now an access road) includes the area where the slate pile was and is still located. Those acres to the east of the railroad spur bed (now access road) include the area where the mine equipment and mine operation buildings were located. The old railroad spur bed has been used as a road and that use has led to an overall diminished appearance of this part of the site to reflect and be interpreted as a railroad associated with the mining complex.

Boundary Justification

The boundary for the Ravenscroft Mine site nomination was chosen based on the high concentration of feature ruins of the mine and mine company operation buildings. The nominated boundary incorporates the center of activity associated with the mine operation itself.

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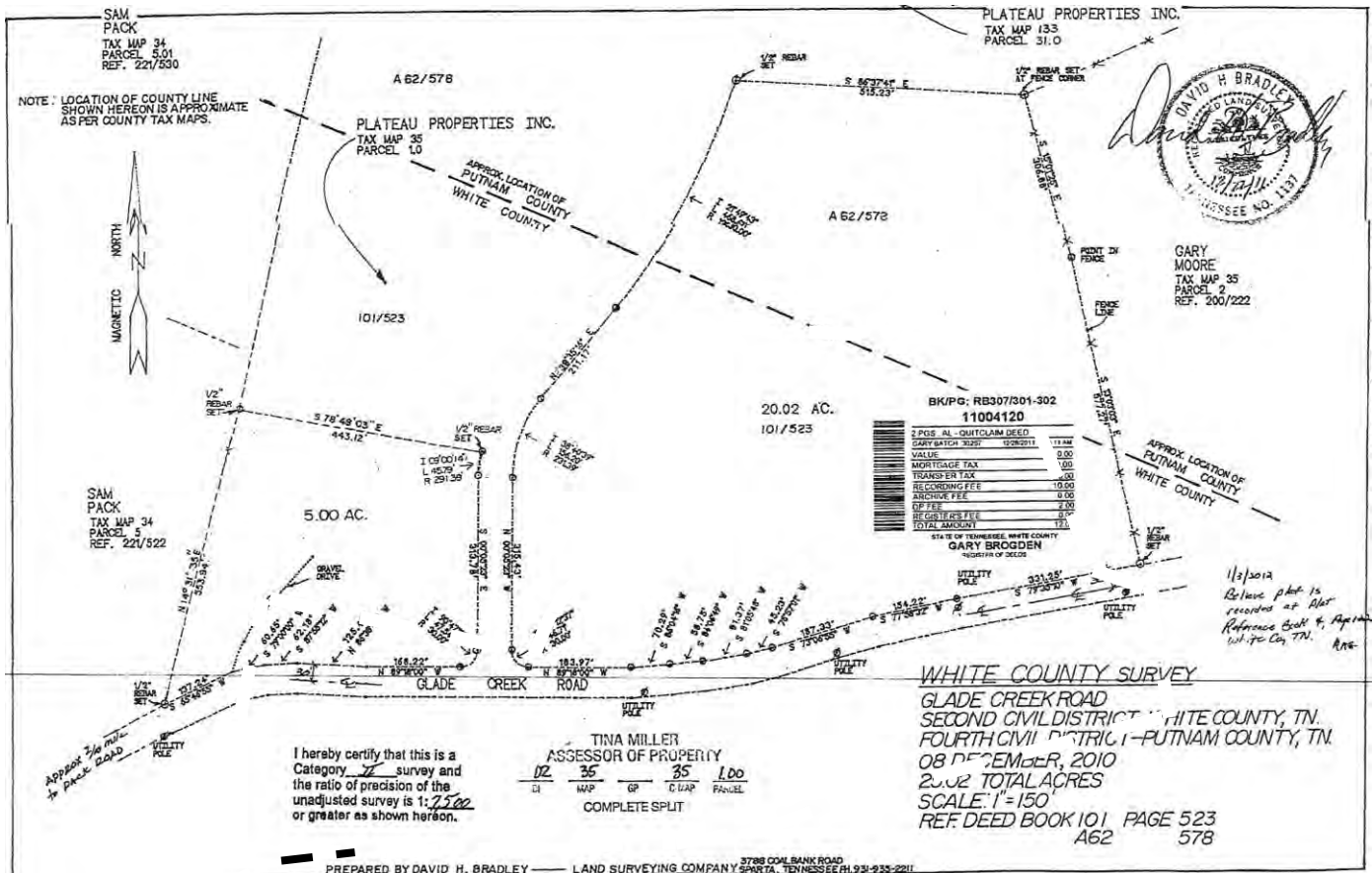
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De Rossett USGS Quadrangle (332 NE) 1954 showing the location of the Ravenscroft Mine Site.
Scale is 1:24 000.

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White County Survey Document of Ravenscroft Mine Boundary.

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11. Form Prepared By

Name Michael Birdwell; TTU; Grace Claudy, TTU; Don Graham- Bon Air Historical Society;
Calvin Dickinson; (Peggy Nickell, TN Historical Commission)

Organization Tennessee Technological University (TTU)

Street & Number 5 William L. Jones Drive

Date February 2, 2015

City or Town Cookeville

Telephone (931) 372-3332

E-mail birdie@tntech.edu

State TN

Zip Code 38505

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to map.
- **Photographs** (refer to Tennessee Historical Commission National Register *Photo Policy* for submittal of digital images and prints)
- **Additional items:** (additional supporting documentation including historic photographs, historic maps, etc. should be included on a Continuation Sheet following the photographic log and sketch maps)

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Photo Log

Name of Property: Ravenscroft Mine

City or Vicinity: Bon Air/Sparta

County: White County State: TN

Photographer: Grace Claudy; Peggy Nickell

Date Photographed: October 17, 2013, April 27, 2015

- 1 of 22. Entrance sign for the mine site. View to the north.
- 2 of 22. View of the entrance drive to the mine site. The entrance road is actually the original railroad bed. View to the northwest.
- 3 of 22. View of the southwest corner of the property. View is to the southwest towards the intersection of Glade Creek Road and the entrance road of the mine.
- 4 of 22. Slate dump pile located on the west side of the original railroad bed. View to the west.
- 5 of 22. Close-up of the slate dump pile. View to the west.
- 6 of 22. Railroad bed. View to the north.
- 7 of 22. Concrete monolith presumed to be the remains of a hoist system. View to the northeast.
- 8 of 22. Concrete monolith-west and south elevations. View of the northeast.
- 9 of 22. Concrete monolith-east elevation. View to the west.
- 10 of 22. Indention on the concrete monolith-west elevation. View to the east.
- 11 of 22. View between two concrete machine bases/platforms towards the concrete monolith. Possible in-filled mine entrance. View to the west.
- 12 of 22. View of the concrete machine bases/platforms. View to the north.
- 13 of 22. View of the concrete machine bases/platforms. View to the southwest.
- 14 of 22. Close-up of the machine bases/platforms. View down and to the northeast.
- 15 of 22. Short concrete foundation wall. View to the northeast.
- 16 of 22. Short concrete foundation wall. View to the southeast.

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-
- 17 of 22. View between two machine bases/platforms within the northwest short foundation walls. View to the west.
- 18 of 22. View of the southwest corner of the northwest short foundation walls. View to the west.
- 19 of 22. Large concrete base. View to the south.
- 20 of 22. Large concrete base. View to the east.
- 21 of 22. Southeast corner of the foundation walls. View to the northeast.
- 22 of 22. Machine bases/platforms. View to the northwest.

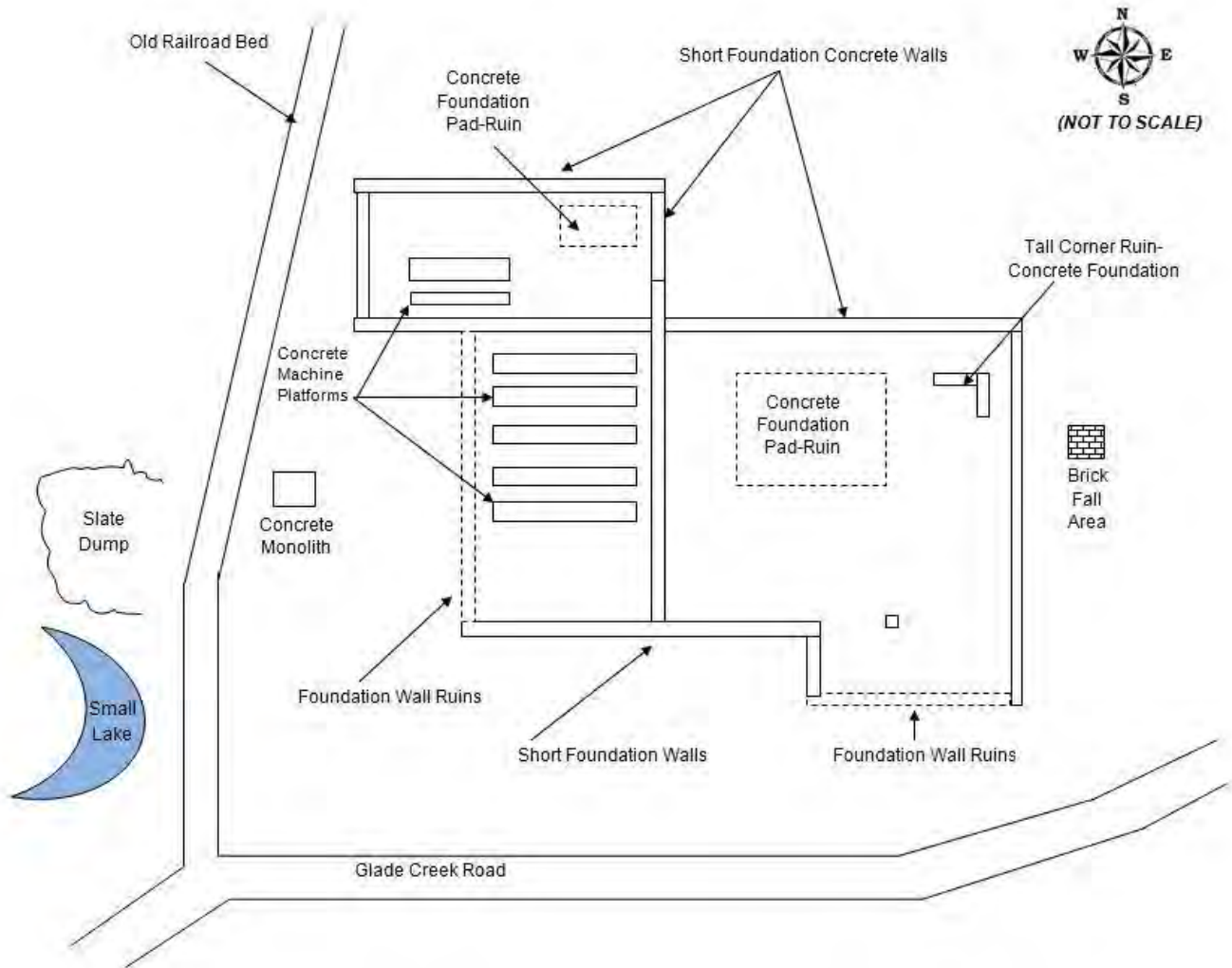
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Ravenscroft Site Plan



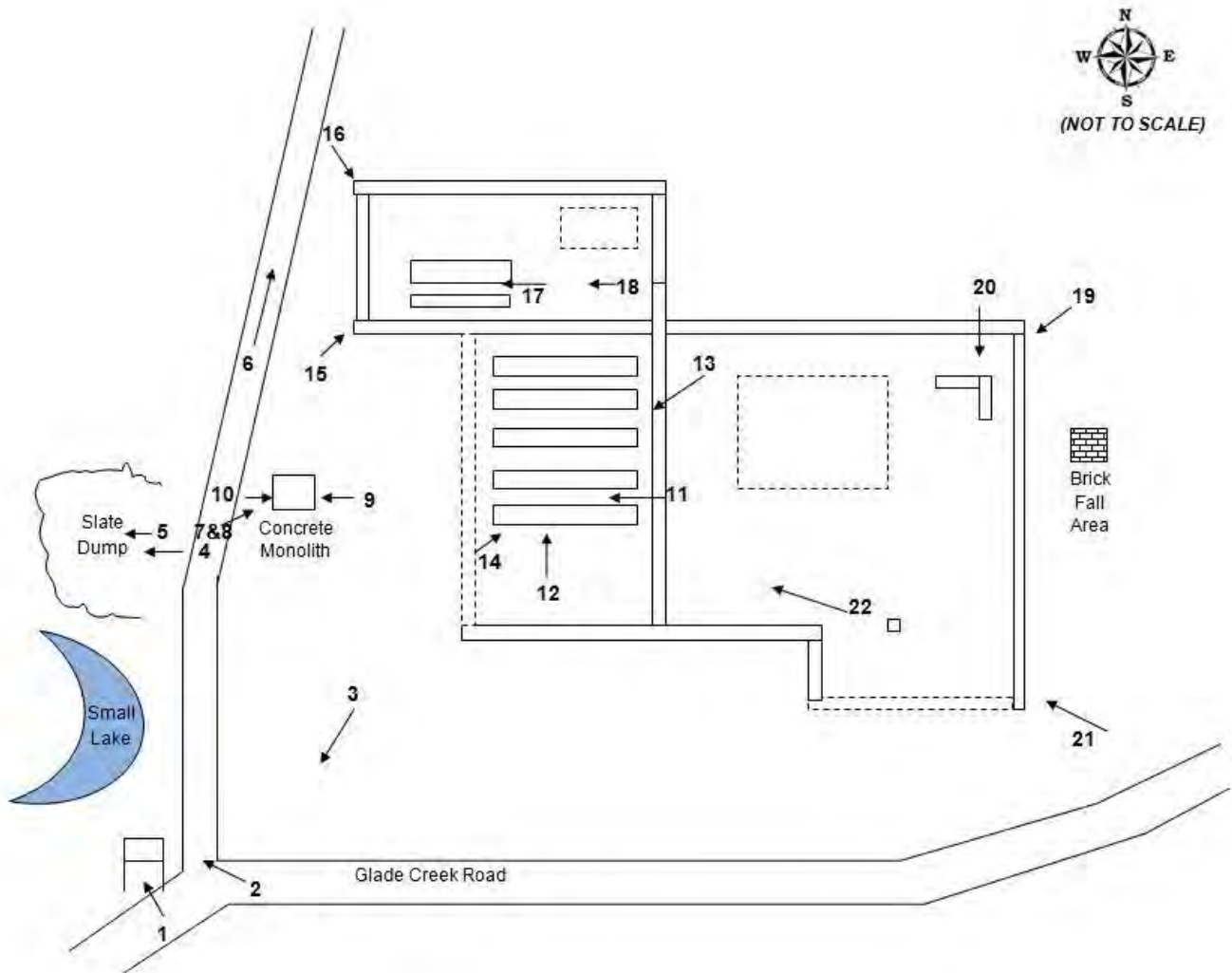
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Ravenscroft Site Plan and Photo Key



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Figure 1: Close up of Ravenscroft, Date Unknown, Photographer Unknown.
Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.

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Figure 2: Close up of Ravenscroft, Date Unknown, Photographer Unknown.
Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.

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Figure 3: Close Up of Tibble, Date Unknown, Photographer Unknown. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*

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Figure 4: Tipple and Power Plant, Date Unknown, Photographer Unknown. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*

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Figure 5: Tipple with Smoke, Date Unknown, Photographer Unknown.
Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.

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Figure 6: Ravenscroft Mine and Tipple, c. 1923, Date Unknown, Photographer Unknown. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*

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Figure 7: Loaded coal below Ravenscroft tippie, Tennessee Products Corporation. *Photo courtesy of The Southern Tennessee Coal Field by Wilbur Armistead Nelson.*

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Figure 8: Loading three sizes of coal at Ravenscroft tippie, Tennessee Products Corporation. *Photo courtesy of The Southern Tennessee Coal Field by Wilbur Armistead Nelson.*

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Figure 9: Lump coal screen, Ravenscroft tippel, Tennessee Products Corporation. *Photo courtesy of The Southern Tennessee Coal Field by Wilbur Armistead Nelson.*

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

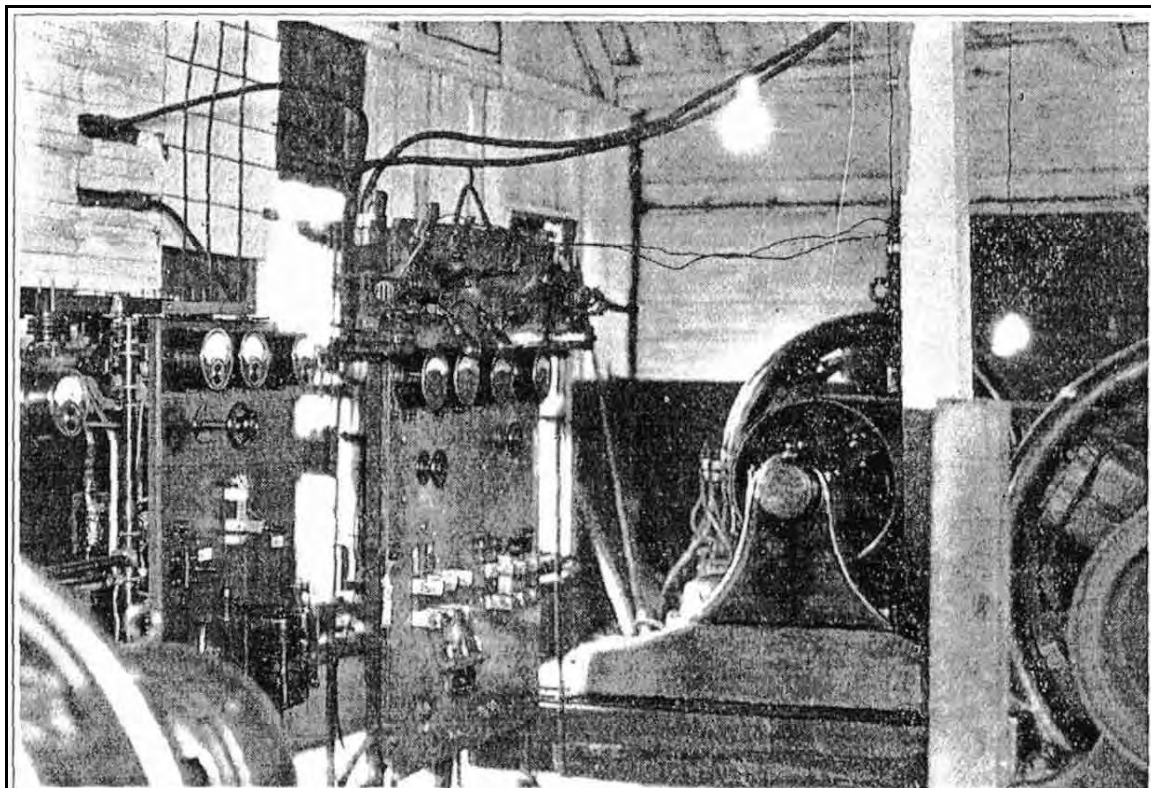


Figure 10: Generator and Switchboard in Power House at Ravenscroft, Tennessee. One of the mines of the Bon Air Coal & Iron Corporation. *Photo courtesy of The Southern Tennessee Coal Field by Wilbur Armistead Nelson.*

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Figure 11: Sawmill at Ravenscroft, c. 1921. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*

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Figure 12: Water Trough, Ravenscroft TN Mines. Date Unknown, Photographer Unknown.
Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.

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Figure 13: Unknown machinery at Ravenscroft Mine, possibly a mine hoist, Date Unknown, Photographer Unknown. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*

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Figure 14: Shaft Bottom at Ravenscroft Mine, Tennessee Products Corporation, Nashville, Tennessee. Date Unknown, Photographer Unknown. *Photo courtesy of The Southern Tennessee Coal Field by Wilbur Armistead Nelson.*

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Figure 15: Motors at Shaft Bottom in Ravenscroft Mine, Tennessee Products Corporation. Date Unknown, Photographer Unknown. *Photo courtesy of The Southern Tennessee Coal Field by Wilbur Armistead Nelson.*

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Figure 16: Room No. 2 Cross Entry, Bon Air Coal & Iron Corporation at Ravenscroft, Tennessee.
Photo courtesy of The Southern Tennessee Coal Field by Wilbur Armistead Nelson.

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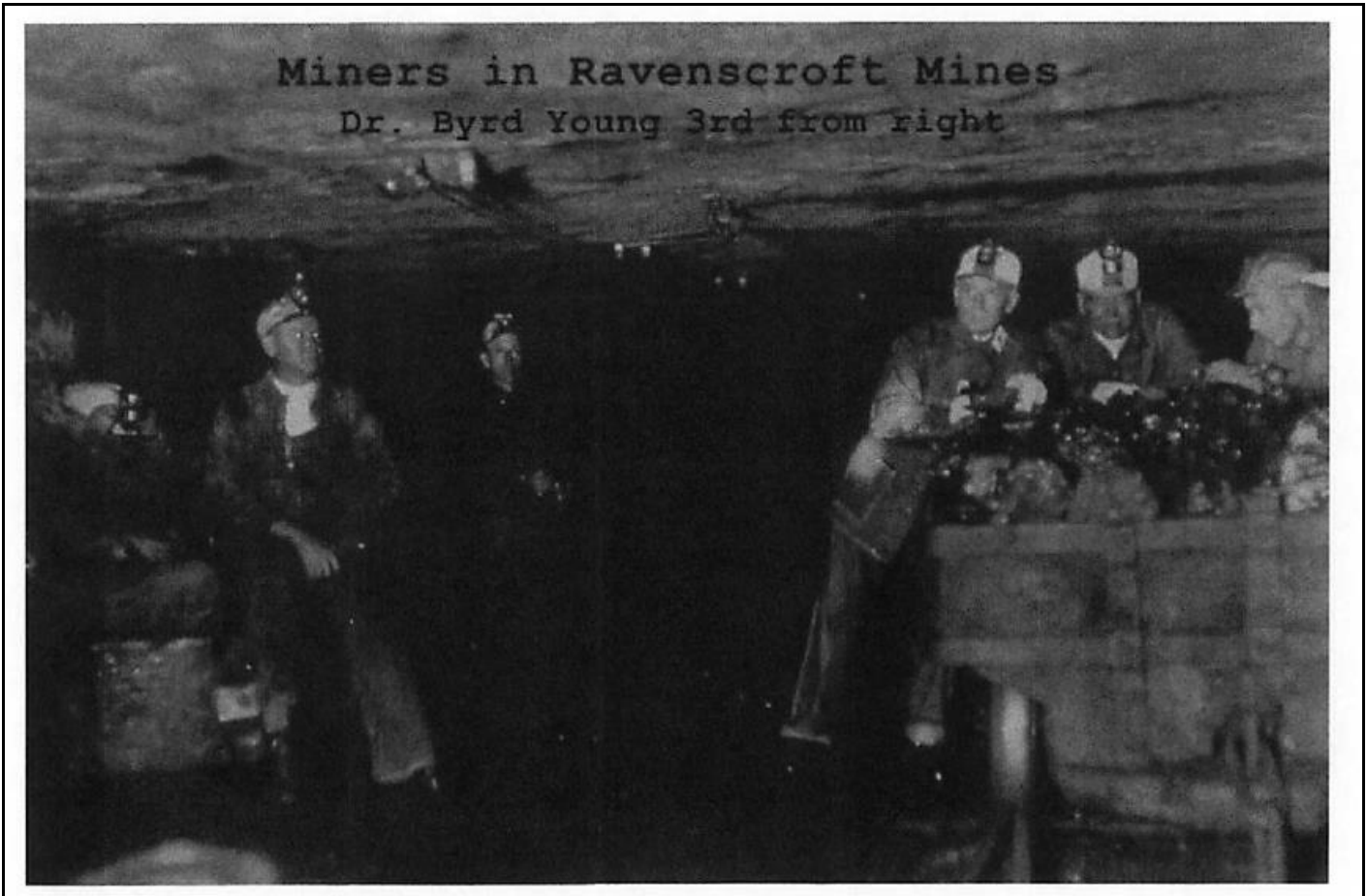


Figure 17: Miners Underground in Ravenscroft Mine, Date Unknown, Photographer Unknown. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*

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Figure 18: Coal Miners Underground in Ravenscroft Mine, Date Unknown, Photographer Unknown. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*

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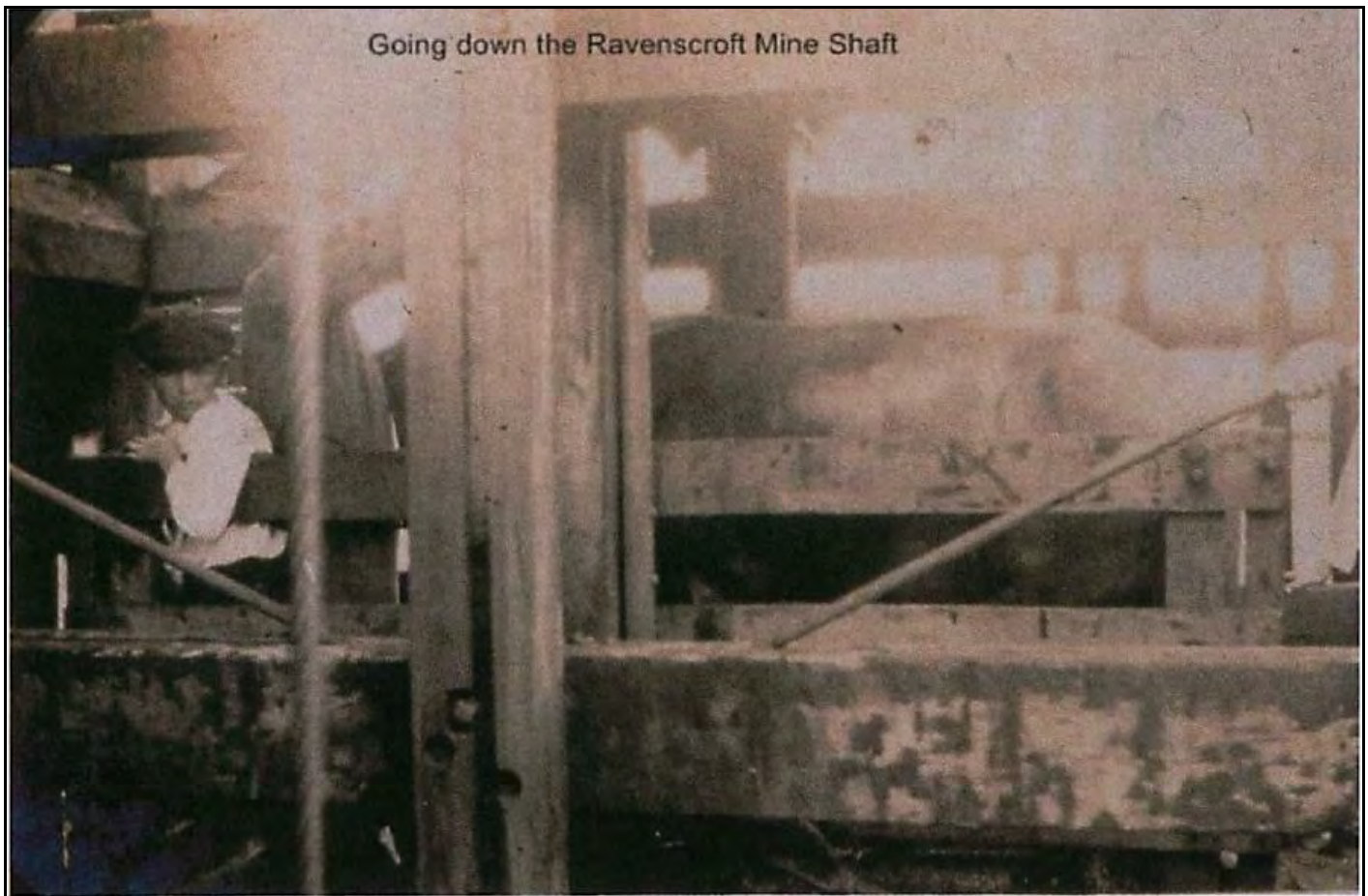


Figure 19: Boy and Mule, Date Unknown, Photographer Unknown. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*

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Figure 20: Representative example of the mine opening. Mouth of Powell Mine, c. 1923. Photographer Unknown. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*

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Figure 21: Lake in the immediate vicinity of Ravenscroft Mine, Tennessee Products Corporation. *Photo courtesy of The Southern Tennessee Coal Field by Wilbur Armistead Nelson.*

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Figure 22: Highway 70A, Bon Air Mountain. Date unknown, photographer unknown. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*

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Figure 23: Road near Ravenscroft, c. 1924. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*

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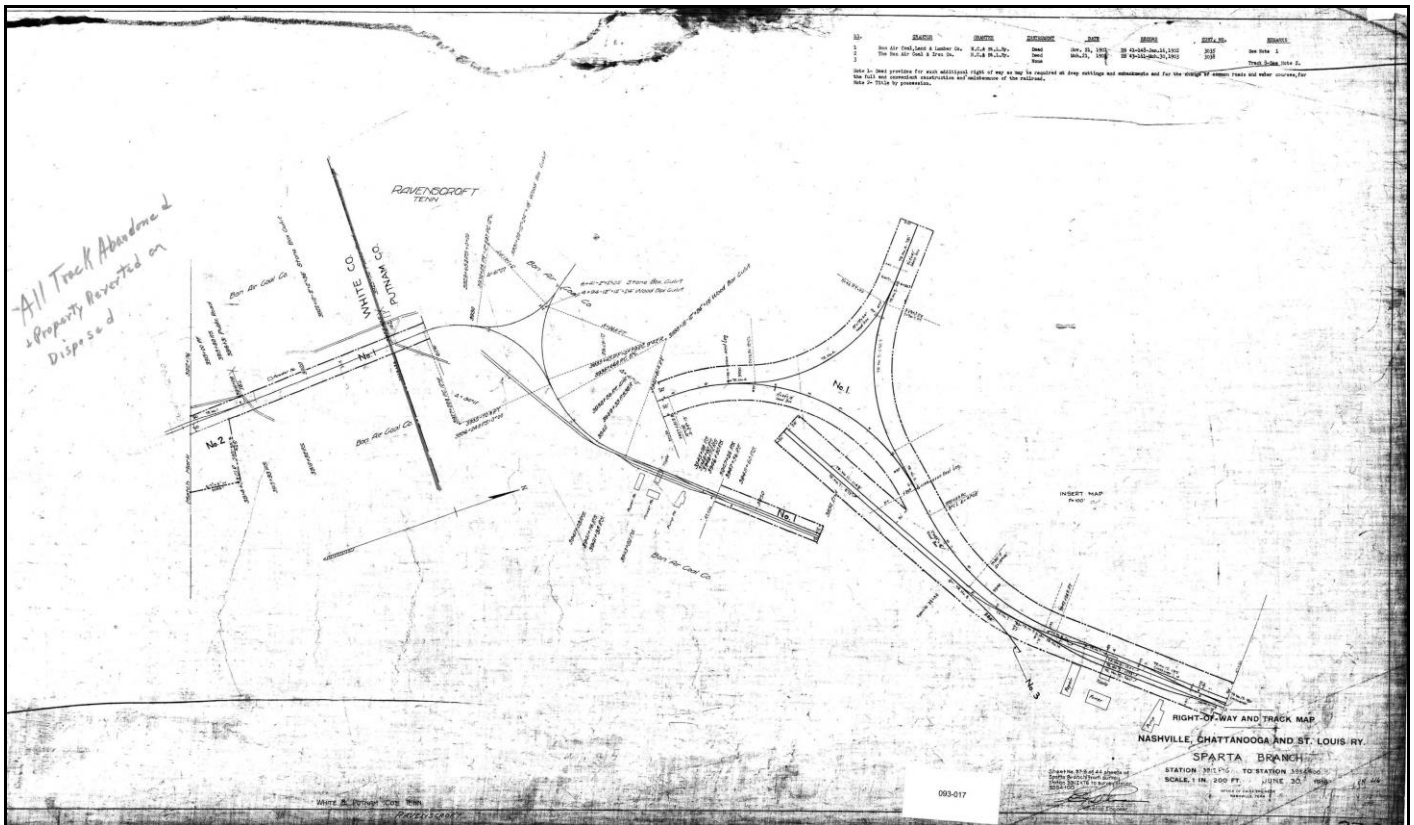


Figure 24: Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway-Sparta Branch. Representative example of the possible building placement of the Ravenscroft Mine complex – overall. *Map courtesy of the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury.*

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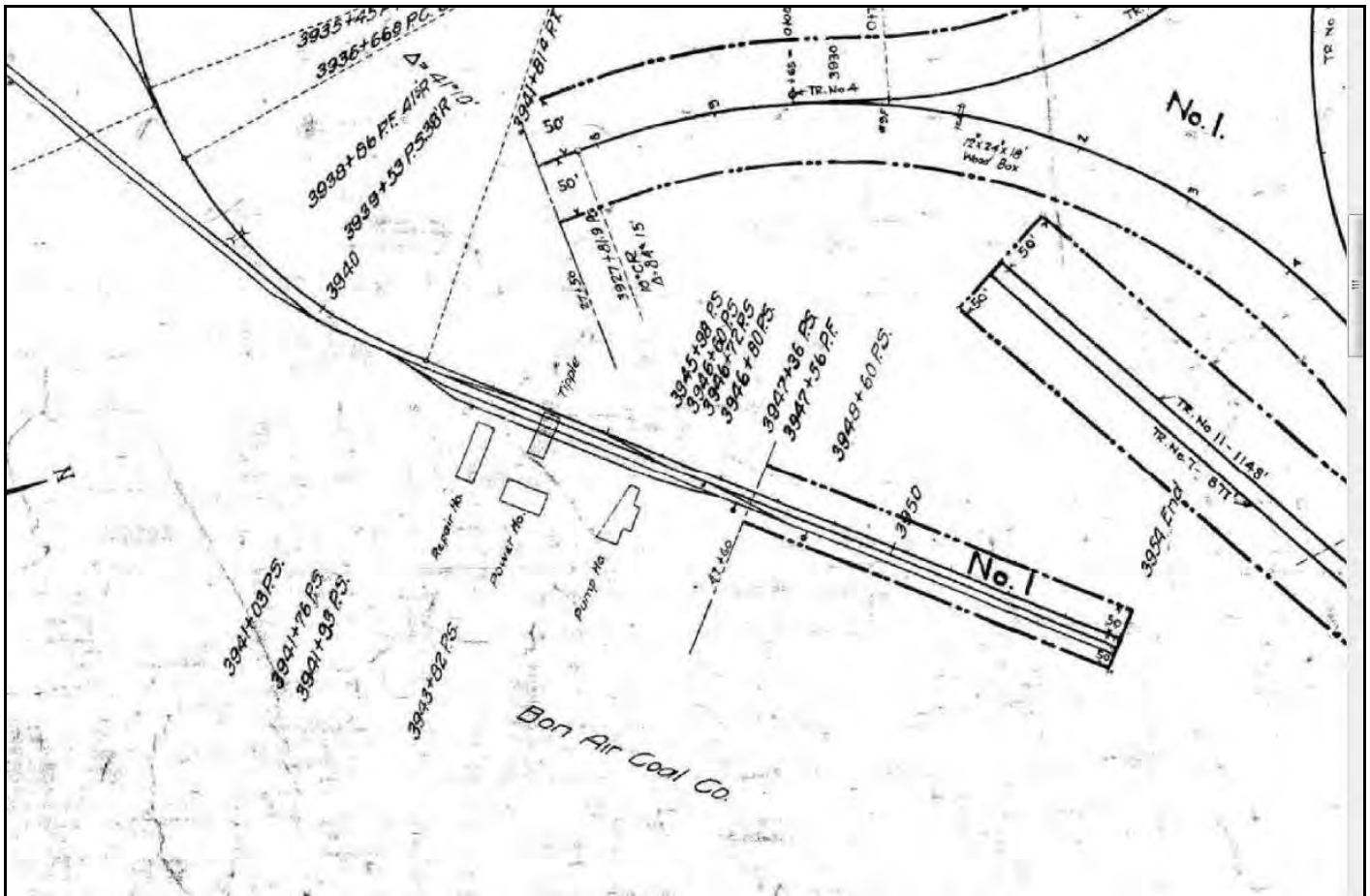


Figure 25: Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway-Sparta Branch. Representative example of the possible building placement of the Ravenscroft Mine complex –close-up. Map courtesy of the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury.

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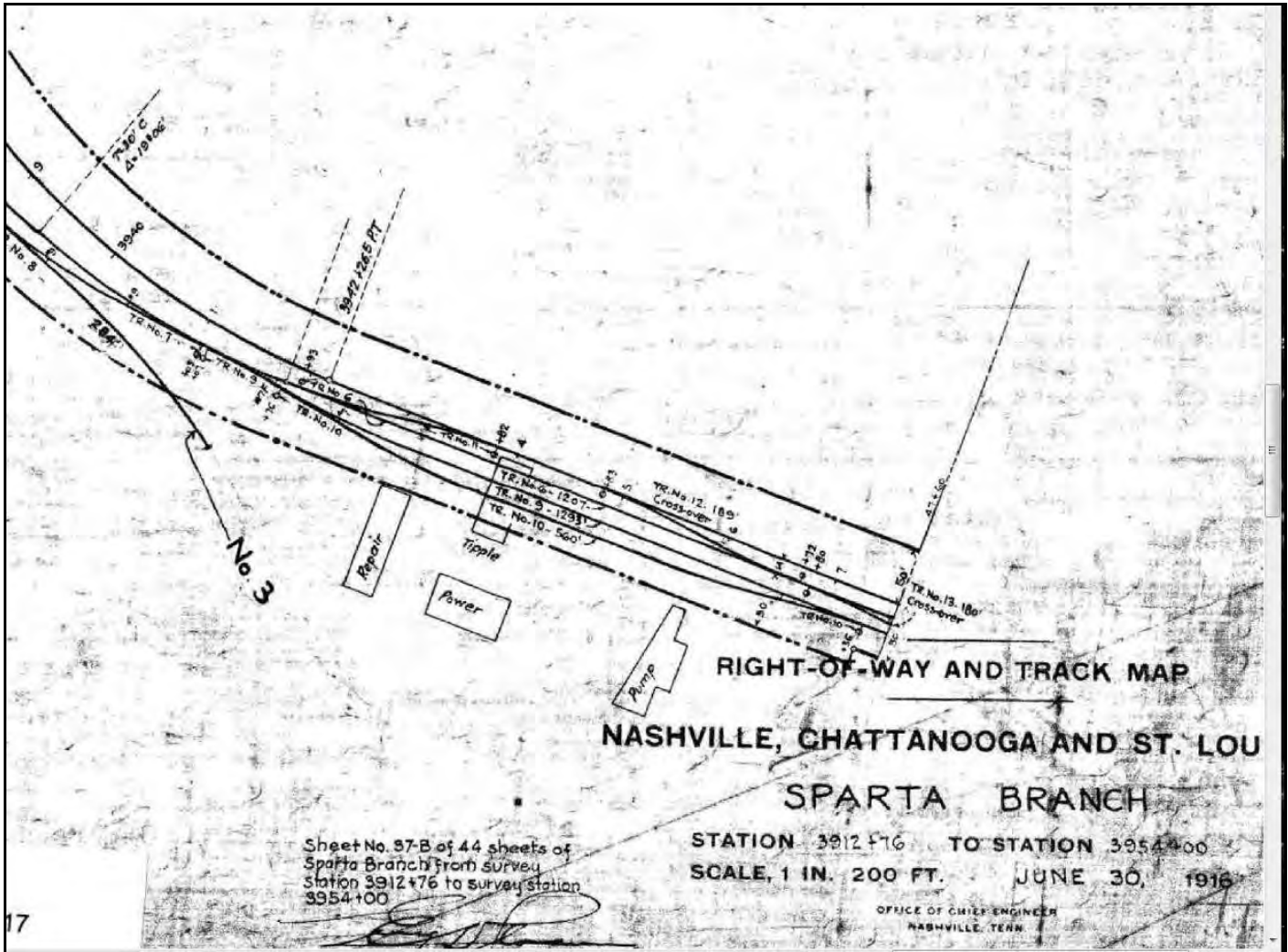


Figure 26: Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway-Sparta Branch. Representative example of the possible building placement of the Ravenscroft Mine complex – close-up. Map courtesy of the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury.

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Figure 27: Railroad Incline leading to Ravenscroft Mine, date unknown. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*



Figure 28: Ravenscroft Rail bed, c. 1921. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*

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Figure 29: Ravenscroft Trestle, c. 1923. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*

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Figure 30: Coal Train in Winter, c. 1923. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*

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Figure 31: Lone Rock Railroad Cut, date and photographer unknown. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*

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Figure 32: Lone Rock, looking south, near Bon Air, Tennessee (Upper part of Bon Air Formation.) *Photo courtesy of The Southern Tennessee Coal Field by Wilbur Armistead Nelson.*

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Figure 33: Bon Air Commissary in Ravenscroft, date and photographer unknown. *Photo courtesy of the Bon Air Historical Society.*

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Figure 34: Ravenscroft Depot, date unknown, photographer unknown. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*

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Figure 35: Ravenscroft Post Office, date unknown, photographer unknown. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*

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Figure 36: Cricket Fulmer, a professional baseball player from Ravenscroft.



Figure 37: Carl Rowan, a renowned journalist and political activist from Ravenscroft.

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Figure 38: Ed and Kittie at Tip Top, date unknown. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*

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Figure 39: Fuqua and Mack Holland with Supplies, c. 1923. Photographer unknown. *Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.*

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Figure 40: Dr. Young and Mr. Gilbreath, Roadside near Ravenscroft, c. 1924. Photo courtesy of Bon Air Historical Society.

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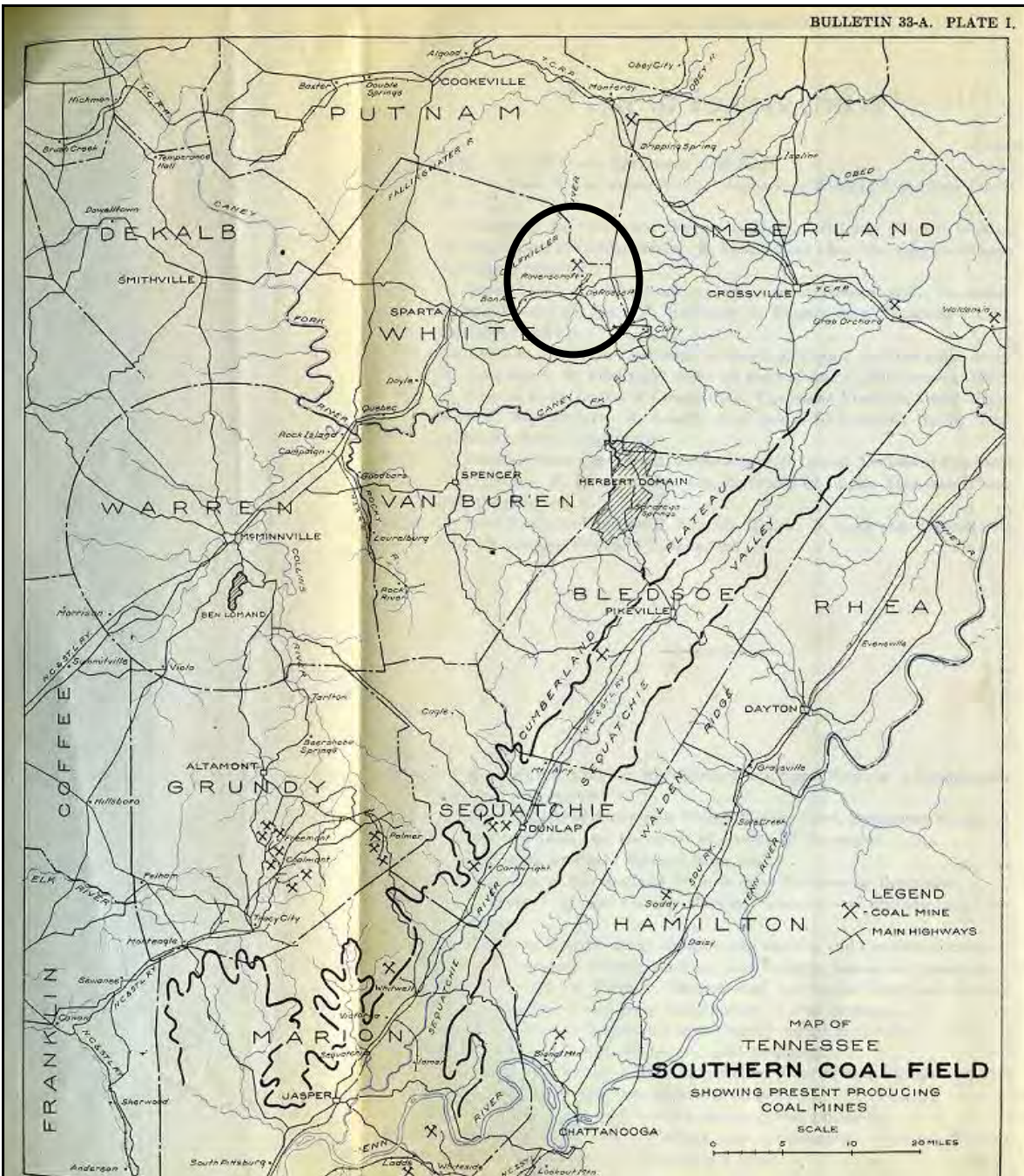


Figure 41: Map of Tennessee Southern Coal Field Showing Present [1925] Producing Coal Mines noted with a circle. Map courtesy of *The Southern Tennessee Coal Field* by Wilbur Armistead Nelson.

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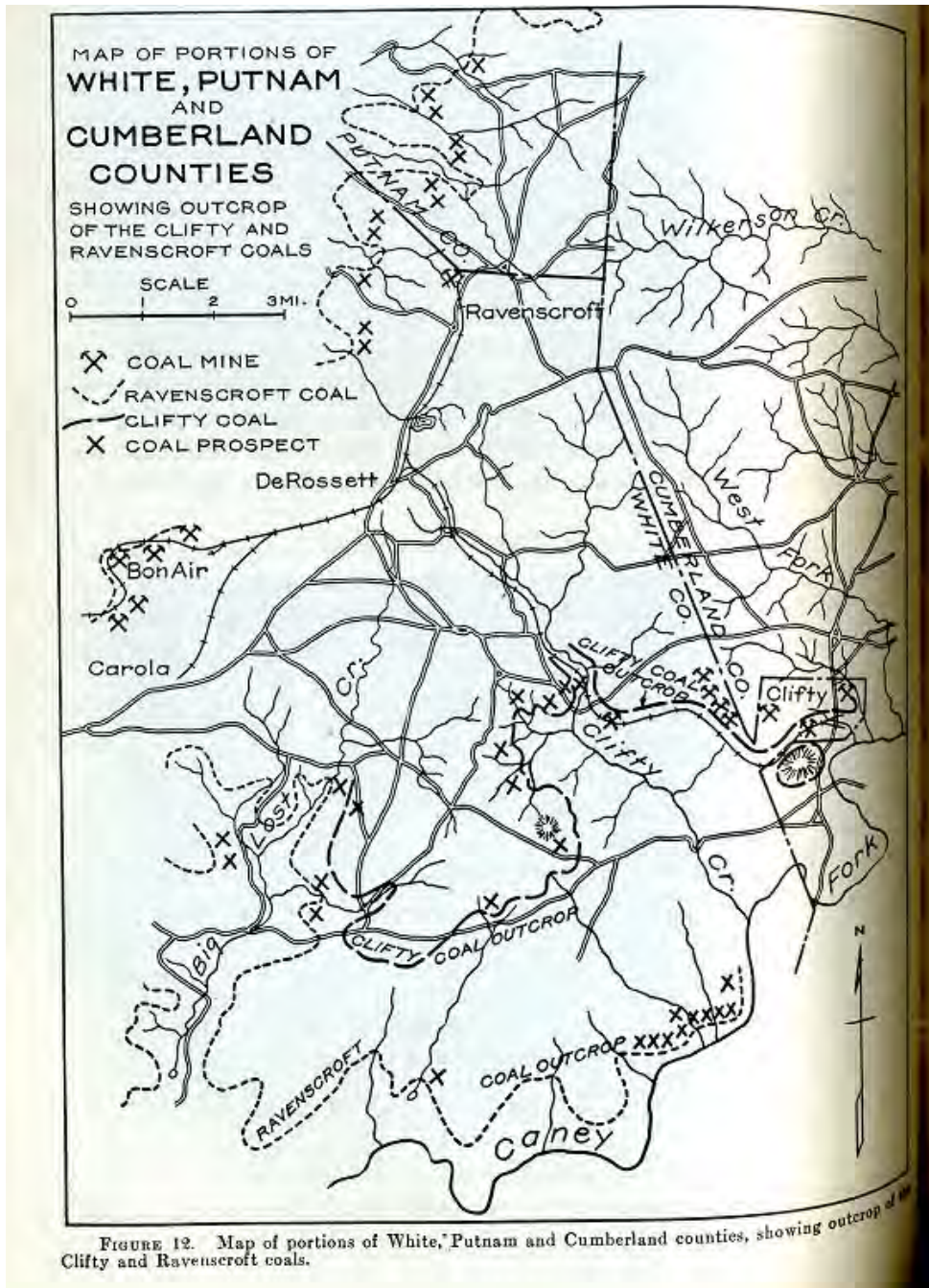


Figure 42: Map of portions of White, Putnam and Cumberland counties, showing outcrop of the Clifty and Ravenscroft coals (date unknown). Map courtesy of The Southern Tennessee Coal Field by Wilbur Armistead Nelson.

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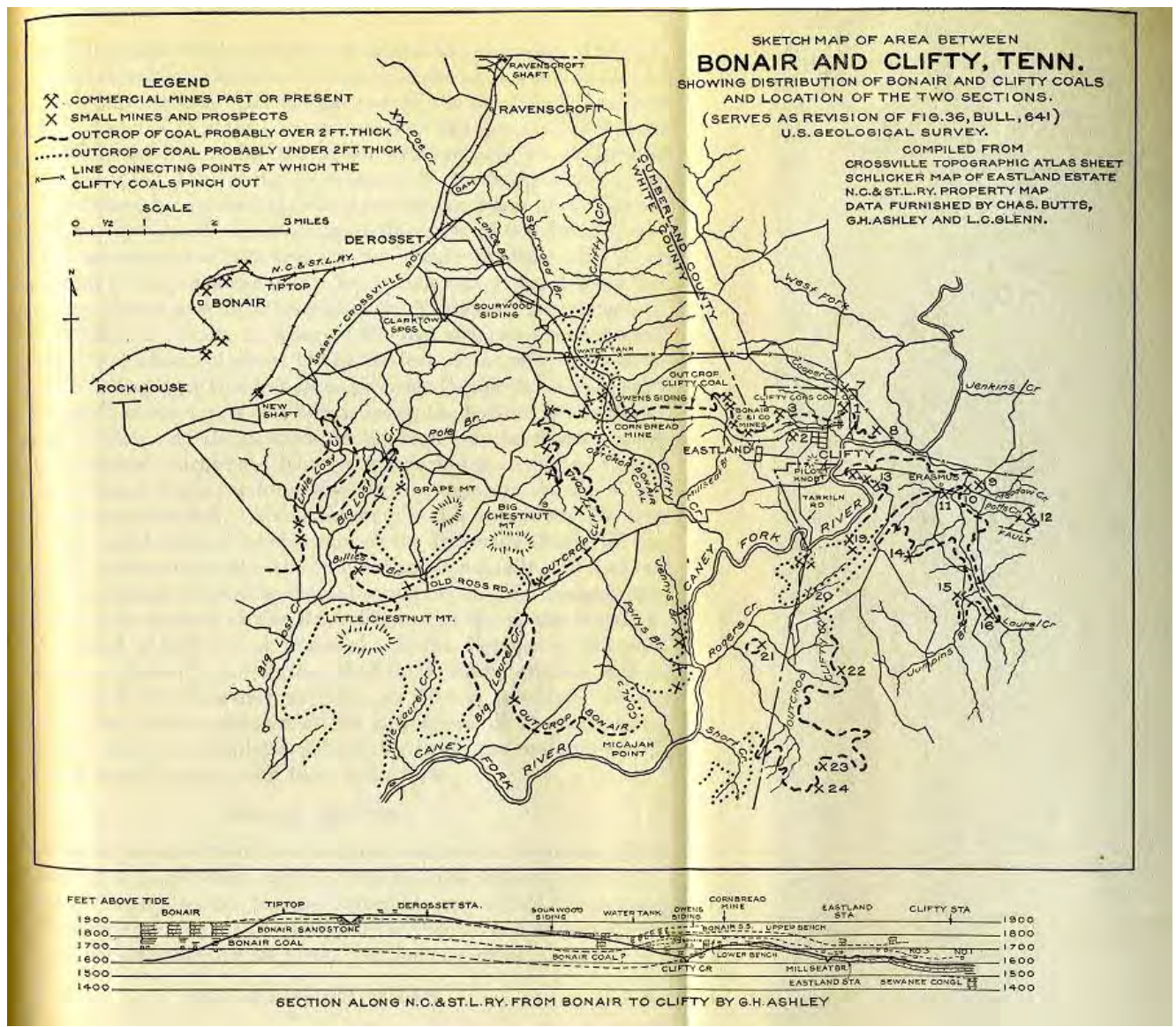


Figure 43: Sketch Map of Area Between Bonair and Clifty Coals and Location of the Two Sections (date unknown). Map courtesy of The Southern Tennessee Coal Field by Wilbur Armistead Nelson.

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Figure 44: Ravenscroft Mine showing the below ground mine entries and rooms and the above ground town lots and the railroad, approximately 1916. (scale unknown). Map courtesy of Tennessee State Library and Archives.

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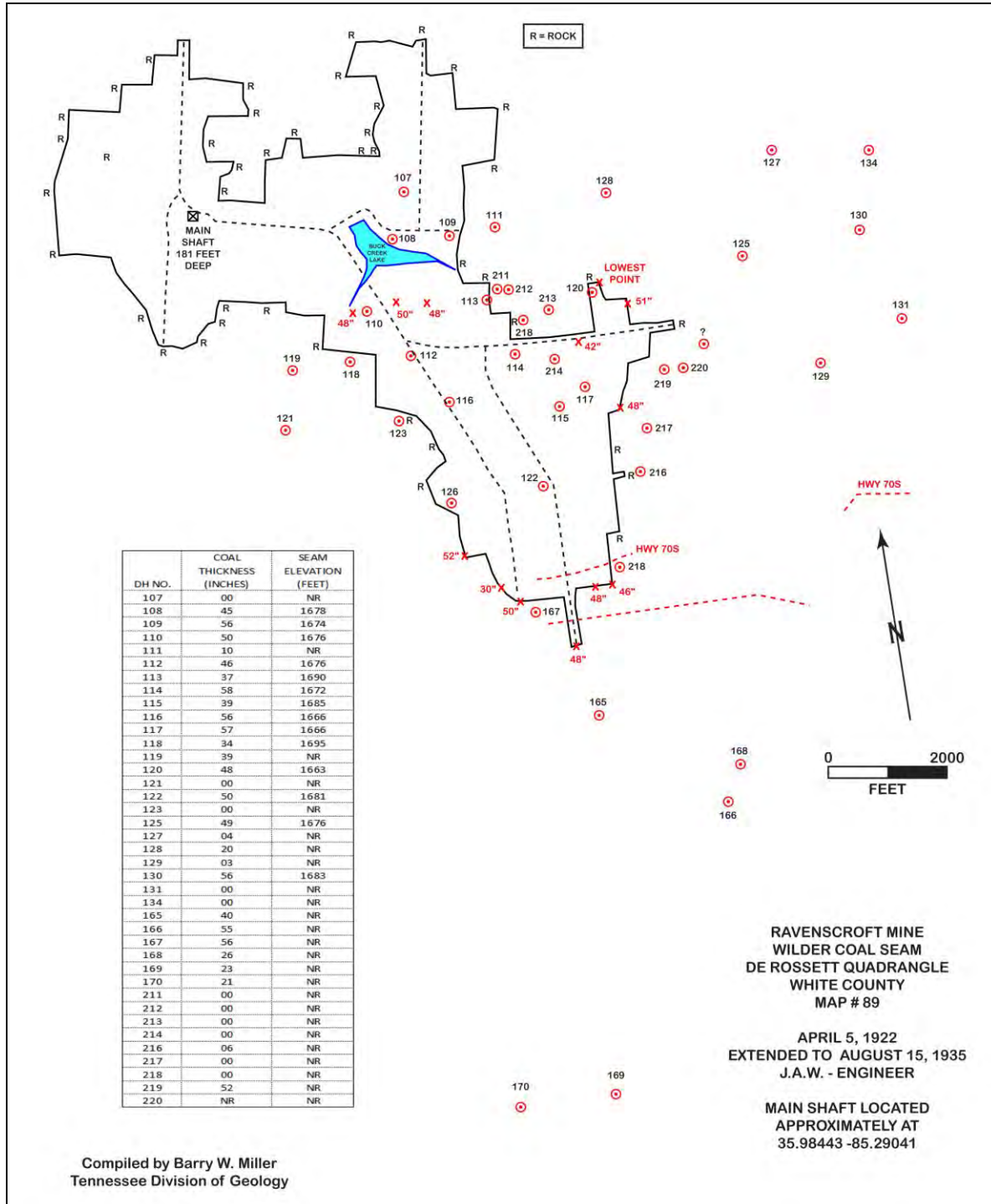


Figure 45: Map showing extent of mine and location and results of test drillings from 1922-1935.

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APPENDIX A – REPORTS OF MINING CONDITIONS

Ravenscroft, Tennessee.
August 13, 1934.

Dr. W. B. Young,
Ravenscroft, Tennessee.

Dear Doctor Young:

In accordance with your instructions regarding development in the Ravenscroft mine, we submit for consideration the following report with reference to working conditions as they now exist and prospects for future life of mine as shown by diamond core drilling:

NO. 11 RIGHT ENTRY - (Stopped since report was made - bad conditions) -

This entry was stopped on account of going up hill with a 7 foot lift of bottom, small coal and according to diamond drilling no prospect ahead. Eight men are still working rooms off of this entry, none of which are very good.

NO. 12 RIGHT ENTRY AND AIR COURSE - (Stopped since report was made - rock) -

This entry is being worked in coal 34 inches at the face with 15½ inches of sulphur over same. Air course same condition as the entry, Five men are working three rooms on this entry and air course. These rooms have bad top and other unfavorable conditions. The prospect for future development for this entry is doubtful according to drill holes ahead.

MAIN SOUTH ENTRY AND AIR COURSE -

The coal in this entry is 48". Condition of top bad and an unusual amount of water coming through the top. Four rooms are being worked on these entries. Coal average 46". One room good. The others bad top making them expensive to operate. The prospect for future development of this entry is very good as shown by drill holes, provided faults or other bad conditions does not show up between the holes.

"A" SOUTH ENTRY AND AIR COURSE -

This entry is being worked in coal 36" inches. Condition of entry fair considering height of coal. Eight rooms are being worked in coal with average thickness of 42 inches. Five of which have fair conditions and the others bad.

"B" SOUTH ENTRY AND AIR COURSE -

Coal in these entries is 45 inches in thickness. Conditions fair except very wet. Eight rooms are being worked. Coal average 41 inches. Condition of rooms on air course side are bad. Off other side fairly good.

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"C" SOUTH ENTRY AND AIR COURSE -

This entry is being worked in 48 inches coal. Condition good. Ten rooms are being worked with coal average of 44 inches. Conditions fair. The development for Main South and "A", "B" and "C" south as shown by drill holes should be 3,000 feet to 4,500 feet, unless as before stated bad conditions are encountered between drill holes.

"D" SOUTH ENTRY AND AIR COURSE - (Stopped since report was made - rock) -

In this entry the thickness of coal is 41 inches. Condition at present time is fair. These entries are being driven along side of rock fault. Rooms on left side having been driven to the rock. Seven rooms in fair condition and are being worked here with average coal thickness of 46", These entries may be cut off at any time by this rock fault.

7 - EAST MAIN ENTRY -

As you know this entry was driven into a solid rock fault several months ago and Mr. T. H. Graham, well known driller and prospector was employed and did drill two holes ahead of this entry with the result that no coal was found. Originally this entry was laid out to be a main entry, during the life of the mine.

5 - EAST AND 5 EAST CROSS ENTRIES -

These entries have been stopped in presumably the same fault as 7 E. Main.

4 - EAST MAIN ENTRY -

This entry was as you know laid out to be a permanent main. Was driven through about 600 feet of solid rock because the drill holes showed good coal on the other side of the fault. After driving through this rock the entry was driven about 400 feet in low coal, then it dipped 27 feet in 300 feet running about 100 feet level and went to rise about 15 feet and came back to a level, then again started up a steep hill and is now in this condition at the face. Coal height at face 32 inches. The coal plays out at about 100 feet on the left side of this entry and on the right the coal average is around 48 inches with from 12 inches to 18 inches of draw rock over it. On account of the irregular elevation of this coal it is impossible to handle same with haulage motors. It is gathered with mules at the bottom and brought up the hill with electric hoist making the operation of this section very expensive. No. 7 South and No. 9 North turned off of No. 4 East and have the same haulage conditions as No. 4 East. No. 7 South is still working in 52 inches coal with heavy draw rock but cannot go over 400 feet on account of rock fault and No. 9 North has been stopped on account of bad conditions. No. 8½ North entry off No. 4 East Main, left side hit solid rock August 1. Eight or ten rooms are being worked in this No. 4 East section but cannot be worked on system but have to follow the swags and worked around the hills to the best advantage of haulage, with no definite future here.

The roof conditions in this mine is not as good as it has heretofore been as the rock is becoming more brittle and of a shelving nature that falls readily and the bad top in spreading over a greater area as the mine develops.

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When this area was drilled in 1921 - '22, with diamond drills as you will remember the average thickness of the coal seam as shown by this drilling was 52 inches. For the last few months the average thickness being worked has gradually decreased. The average thickness for July, 1934 as shown by the actual face measurements of rooms and entries in all working places was 44 inches, This indicates that the average thickness of the seam is gradually growing thinner due to squeezes and rock faults and might reach a serious situation with reference to operating the mine.

With approximately 200 men now digging coal and development already retarded on account of entries being driven into rock faults it is only a question of a short time until the force of diggers will have to be reduced and the present number of men could not be employed in the future, unless unusual conditions for the better would develop. The number of rooms would gradually get less which would mean a reduction in our daily tonnage from what we are now getting, which would add materially to the cost per ton.

The original tests by diamond drilling shows a large area of coal in front of the entries being driven south and also a large area of coal in front of the entries being driven east. However, there has developed so many squeezes and rock faults between the original drill holes that it is rather a serious question as to the best methods of future development of this mine.

We fully agree with you that the development has reached the stage where a competent and experienced mining engineer should be employed to make a thorough examination report and recommendation on the physical conditions and operation of the mine.

Respectfully submitted:

/H. Chittick/
Mine Foreman

/J. A. Welch/
Mining Engineer

Ravenscroft, Tennessee.
August 19, 1936.

Dr. W. B. Young, Vice-President,
Ravenscroft, Tennessee.

Dear Doctor Young:

As per your instructions regarding working conditions, and tonnage, that could be mined in the Ravenscroft mine when it was closed, on April 30th, 1936, we submit the following report -

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No. 12 - Right Entry and Air Course:

Heading stopped in solid rock. 15 men were working 10 rooms off this entry. 6 rooms off entry side and 4 off air course side. Most of these rooms are very wet. Coal average in rooms 45". Top not very good. Draw slate over the coal in about one-half of the places.

No. 13 - Right Entry:

Heading is very wet. Draw slate and bad sand rock top. Have to set cross bars all the way. 7 men were working. Two men in heading and five working five single rooms 21 feet in width. Top bad in rooms. Rooms not very wet. Coal average in all working places 48".

No. 14 - Right Entry:

Heading very wet. Draw slate and bad sand rock top. Had to set cross bars all the way. 7 men working - two men in heading and five men driving five single rooms 21 feet wide. Four of the rooms wet. Coal average in these places 45".

No. 15 - Right Entry:

Heading very wet. Bad sand rock top. Cross bars had to be set all the way. Two room necks, but no rooms working. Coal thickness 40". Two men were working heading.

No. 16 - Right Entry:

Heading wet. Bad sand rock top. Has to be cross-bars set all the way. Coal 30". No rooms. Two men working heading.

Main South Entry and Air Course:

Heading and air course wet. Top is of sand rock and fairly good. 12" band of sand rock in coal. Coal 48", including sand rock band. Two rooms 42 feet in width with three men working. Three men working heading and air course. No rooms turned on air course side. Coal average in rooms 55". 14" rock bands in coal in rooms.

Cross-over heading and air course off Main South:

Very bad sand rock top. Wet coal. Height in heading 50" and in air course 46". Band of rock in coal. 4 men working.

"A" South entry and air course:

Heading with sand rock top, not very good. Coal in entry 45" and in air course 43", and fairly dry. 4 men working heading and air course. 14 men were working ten rooms off this entry and air course. Average coal thickness in rooms 42". Rooms not very wet.

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"B" South heading and air course:

Have been stopped for some time on account of thin coal, water, rolls, and bad top. No rooms working.

"C" South heading and air course:

Stopped account approaching No. 8 East Entry. 16 men were working 8 rooms 42' width and coal average of 42". Good top. All rooms wet.

"D" South entry and air course:

Stopped in solid rock. Rooms all worked out.

No. 8 - East entry and air course:

Heading with good top and dry. Coal height 38[?]" . 3 men working heading and air course. 10 men working 6 rooms. Coal average 45". Wet.

"C" Cross entry and air course off 8 - East:

Coal in heading 45" and air course 41". 13 men working 7 rooms with coal 44". 2 men working heading and 2 men working air course. All rooms wet.

"D" Cross entry and air course off 8 - East:

This entry just turning with sand rock top good. Wet and coal 32". Three men working here.

No. 7 - South entry was driven to and connected with, No. 5 - East Cross.

No. 1 - Left double entry off 7 - South:

Coal 44". These entries are connected with No. 8 - South off 4 - East Main. 4 men working the two headings. 13 men working ten single rooms. Coal average in rooms 47". One-half of rooms are wet.

No. 2 - Left entry and air course off No. 7 - South stopped in solid rock: 6 men working 3 double rooms all wet.

No. 1 - Right off 7 - South stopped on account thin coal: 3 men working one double room.

No. 8 & 9 - South off 4 - East main entry:

These entries are connected with No. 1 - Left off No. 7 - South. Twelve men working 9 single rooms. Bad top with draw slate over coal. All wet. Average coal height 47".

1st Left off No. 9 South:

Sand rock top with 15" draw rock over the coal. Three men were working here.

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No. 10 & 11 - North off 4 - East Main:

Coal height 35". Good sand rock top. 6 men working five rooms of coal average height 46". Two rooms wet. 3 men working headings.

The last month this mine was worked, which was April, 1936, an average daily tonnage of 865 was produced on 7 hour per day and the mine operated 22 days.

From the drill holes ahead of the entries, it is estimated that between 4000000 and 5,000000 tons of workable coal yet remains in this area.

In the meadow branch territory there is, as proven by diamond drilling, an undeveloped area of approximately 1,000000 tons of workable coal.

There is quite an area of the Bon Air Seam lying between the old Bon Air drift mines under the bluff and Dog Cove. The seam in this area is too thin to operate in the present condition of the coal industry.

There are several places in the sewanee and Bon Air coal seams where wagon or truck mines could be operated.

REPORT OF THE SURFACE OF LANDS -

Near the town of Ravenscroft and Bon Air there is quite a little merchantable timber, and a considerable quantity of chemical timber.

In the section around the Meadow Branch coal opening, also in the Huckleberry Branch territory there is some merchantable timber and quite a quantity of chemical timber.

On the land of the corporation, a quarry has been opened near Clarktown, Tennessee in the famous geological formation, as it exists in quarries near Crossville, that are being operated, and producing the famous colored building stone. From the quarry that has been opened on the corporation land, sheets of building stone have been secured with just as beautiful figures as are found in the well known Crab Orchard quarries, near Crossville, Tennessee.

At the Rockhouse right on the Broadway of America, a quarry has been opened in the limestone formation. There are other places where limestone quarries could be developed.

On the Broadway of America just at the top of the mountain a beautiful location known as the Sunset Rock, one of the most charming locations for a tourist Camp, or Tourist Homes, through which area Wildcat Creek flows, on which a Dam could be built that would impound quite a large lake, consisting of about 100 acres.

The wonderful description given by Thomas Jefferson of his beautiful home is applicable in every way to the charms of this location - "Our own dear Monticello; where has nature spread so rich a mantle under the eye? Mountains, forests, rocks rivers. With what majesty do we there ride above the storms! And the glorious sun when rising as if out of the distant water, just gilding the tops of the mountains, and

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giving life to all nature! - There the most glorious sun sets, as the great luminary gradually sinks to rest after its useful days work."

On the land of the corporation there are a number of flowing wells that were developed in drilling for coal. The largest and most advantageously located is the well known Doe Creek well, that flows quite a stream of water, containing iron, sulphur and other mineral salts. Around this well is an ideal location for a tourist home or camp. Within three hundred feet of this flowing well is what is known as the Doe Creek Railroad Lake. This lake covers at present 8 or 10 acres with a depth in places of more than ten feet. By raising the height of the dam the area of the lake could be materially enlarged. This lake has been for a few years stocked with fish.

From this flowing well the water could easily be pumped into this lake.

The location of this Doe Creek well and lake is less than one mile from the Broadway of America, on a nice cinder road, kept up by the County. It is only 10 miles from Sparta and 18 miles from Crossville, both of which towns are on the Broadway of America.

The Tennessee Products Corporation, own in this section around 52,000 acres, with good titles.

This land is suitable for cattle and sheep ranches, with a number of creeks traversing it. From this land most of the merchantable timber has been cut. This land would also be suitable for a wild game preserve. Through the Eastern section of this land the Caney Fork River flows. It is the largest tributary to the Cumberland River. A dam could be constructed at this point that would impound a large body of water.

Along the Broadway of America that traverses about 15 miles of the Corporation land, there are a number of beautiful building sites, adjoining which are lands suitable for agriculture.

Approved:
submitted,

Respectfully

/W. B. Young/
/H. Chittick/
Vice-President
Mine Foreman

/J. A. Welch/
Mining Engineer

[Notes: Draw slate is a soft slate, shale, or rock from approximately 1 cm to 10 cm thick and located immediately above certain coal seams, which falls quite easily when the coal support is withdrawn.]

The last section of this letter does not pertain to mining technology, but has been retained here because it is of general interest.]

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Ravenscroft Mine

Name of Property

White County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Section number Appendices Page 79

APPENDIX B: MATERIAL INSIDE THE RAVENSCROFT MINE RECOVERABLE

Ravenscroft, Tennessee.
August 15, 1936

RAIL-

51 Tons 40 Lb. steel rail
102 Tons 56 Lb. steel rail
11 Tons 30 Lb. steel rail
87 Tons 25 Lb. steel rail
47 Tons 20 Lb. steel rail
30 Tons 16 Lb. steel rail
60 - 20 Lb. Weir Frogs
7 - 56 Lb. switches
6 - 40 Lb. switches
3 - 30 Lb. switches
18 - 25 Lb. switches

PIPE-

1,000' 6" Bell & Spigot pipe
1,240' 4" wrought iron pipe
7,900' 3" wrought iron pipe
4,300' 2" wrought iron pipe
19,040' 1½" wrought iron pipe
80 1½" globe valves
15 2" globe valves
1 6" gate valve
5 3" gate valves
1 4" gate valve

WIRE & HANGARS-

40,905' - 4-0, Figure 8 Trolley Wire
4,125 - Mine hangars complete
2,600' - 500,000 ?? cable

PUMPS-

16 - 6 X 6 Bulldozer pumps and motors
1 - No. 614 " " " "
2 - 6" Dayton-Dowd Centrifugal pumps (Big Pump Station)
2 - 75 HP - 440 Volt motors (" " ")
2 - Starting boxes complete (" " ")
2 - 3 pole, 150 Amp. switches (" " ")

BOOSTER FANS-

1 - 7' booster fan & 20 H. P. motor
1 - 2' booster fan & 10 H. P. motor

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number Appendices Page 80

Ravenscroft Mine

Name of Property

White County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

MINE CARS-

- 25 - New steel mine cars with wood bottom, 42" track gauge
- 11 - New wood cars, ball bearing wheels, 42" track gauge
- 347 - Old mine cars, Wooden body, Gustafson wheel, 42" track gauge
- 1 - Old steel cars, body & bottom steel

HAULAGE LOCOMOTIVES-

- 6 - Electric haulage locomotives

OTHER EQUIPMENT-

- 1 - Big hoist with rope & starter (4 - East)
- 1 - Sullivan Electric mine hoist
- 1 - Small hoist & motor
- 48 - BGR-4? - Ingersoll-Rand jackhammers
- 48 - 50' hose for jackhammers
- 27 - Humphreys trench pumps
- 3 - Chain hoists
- 2 - Vises & other small tools
- 1 - Oil tank & pump

Historic Site
of the
Ravenscroft
Shaft Mine

1900 - 1936

"Peerless"

174 ft. deep

Historic Site
of the
**Ravenscroft
Shaft Mine**
1900 - 1936
"Peebles"
174 ft. deep

Ravenscroft
Coal Mines
"Wet Mine"
Historic site
No smoking
No alcohol

Please Respect Historical Site
**NO
DUMPING**









































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: Ravencroft Mine

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TENNESSEE, White

DATE RECEIVED: 6/05/15 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 7/07/15
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 7/22/15 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 7/21/15
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 15000449

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N DATA PROBLEM: N LANDSCAPE: N LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N PDIL: N PERIOD: N PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: Y SAMPLE: N SLR DRAFT: N NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

ACCEPT RETURN REJECT 7-21-2015 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

*one of the few & most important shaft mines on the
Cumberland Plateau. Basis for local economy.*

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept H

REVIEWER J. Gribbitt DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/~~N~~ see attached SLR Y/~~N~~

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.

RECEIVED 2280

JUN - 5 2015

Nat. Register of Historic Places
National Park Service



TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

2941 LEBANON ROAD

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-0442

OFFICE: (615) 532-1550

E-mail: Claudette.Stager@tn.gov

(615) 770-1089

www.tnhistoricalcommission.org

May 29, 2015

J. Paul Loether
Deputy Keeper and Chief,
National Register and National Historic Landmark Programs
National Register of Historic Places
1201 Eye Street NW, 8th floor
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Loether:

Enclosed please find the documentation to nominate the *Ravenscroft Mine* to the National Register of Historic Places. The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the listing of the *Ravenscroft Mine* to the National Register of Historic Places.

If you have any questions or if more information is needed, contact Peggy Nickell at 615/770-1087 or Peggy.Nickell@tn.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Claudette Stager".

Claudette Stager
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

CS:pn

Enclosures(4)