



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, 700. 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 LaFollette Coke Ovens
Other names/site number LaFollette Coal & Iron Company; LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company; Ivydell Community
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: Ivydell Road, Water Plant Road, Coke Oven Lane
City or town: LaFollette State: TN County: Campbell
Not For Publication: n/a Vicinity: Zip Code: 37766

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 J. ... 10/6/16
Signature of certifying official/Title: Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, Tennessee Historical Commission Date
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 of 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

11-29-2016
 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
5	0	structures
0	0	objects
6	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/manufacturing facility

PROCESSING/processing site

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE/unoccupied land

LANDSCAPE/forest

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property:

BRICK; STONE/limestone; CONCRETE; METAL/iron;
METAL/steel; EARTH

Narrative Description

Located in Campbell County, Tennessee, the LaFollette Coke Ovens site features the ruins of two coke oven batteries, the foundation of a washed-coal bunker, and ruins of two stone abutments for dual railroad bridges. The site is located in the present-day Ivydell community, located approximately one mile northwest of the LaFollette city center (approximate population: 7,100).¹ The site of the coke ovens was selected for its proximity to the two coal mines (Rex #1 and Rex #2) and associated secondary structures operated by the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company. The ovens were designed to be easily accessed by the two railroad tracks which would load coal and remove coke from the site, and were intentionally placed near the structures necessary for their use, such as the coal washer and the washed-coal bunker. The east coke oven battery is situated on the north bank of Big Creek, and the west coke battery extends in a northerly direction along the west side of the present-day CSX Railroad. The washed-coal bunker foundation is located on the east side of the intersection of Water Plant Road and Ivydell Road, and the stone abutment ruins are located immediately adjacent to Big Creek, beneath the CSX Railroad. These ruins represent an integral part of a once-thriving mining industry in the Cumberland Plateau and East Tennessee regions; founded in 1901, the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company operated two coal mines, an iron ore mine, a rock quarry, and

¹ United States Census Bureau.

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over 300 coke ovens. What remains is an approximately ten-acre area encompassing the ruins, surrounded by vegetative growth, forested land, and some rural residential development. While time, neglect, and weather patterns have caused inevitable deterioration, the coke ovens remain relatively intact. The site has retained integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship. While the ovens, bunker, and other structures are indeed ruins, these elements of integrity allow the LaFollette Coke Ovens to evoke the feeling and association representative of a once-thriving mining site.

1. LaFollette Coke Ovens Site (c. 1894) (Contributing Site)

The approximately ten-acre area of the LaFollette Coke Ovens site encompasses the west and east coke oven ruins, the west battery's stone retaining wall, the bridge abutment ruins, and the washed-coal bunker foundation. The site's boundary also includes an elevated railroad, supported by poured-concrete and stone pillar abutments that date to the same turn-of-the-century time period as the other features. The railroad originated as part of the Southern Railway line around 1897, and is presently part of the CSX rail line. Features dating to the late twentieth-century include paved roadways (Ivydell Road and Water Plant Road) and a gravel road between the two batteries of the east coke ovens, named Coke Oven Lane. Big Creek serves as the southernmost boundary for the site. The majority of the site has been infilled with trees and vegetation. The area surrounding the coke ovens is enclosed by vines, shrubbery, and other vegetative growth. Some small trees grow along both portions of coke ovens, while larger trees line the creek. A swath of grassed land extends south to Water Plant Road from the west battery retaining wall. A rudimentary gravel parking lot is located immediately east from the grassed area, north of Water Plant Road. The site could potentially hold numerous features that belong to the coal mining era, but they would be obscured below heavy vegetative growth and remain unknown. No archaeological investigations have been performed on the site.

Constructed and operated by the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company, the coke ovens are beehive-type ovens, which employ a dome shape with an interior of firebrick. At this site, there are two sections of ovens, known as batteries, arranged in rows with their doorways in a common outer wall of stacked stone. Both east and west sections of ovens are dual batteries, or ovens placed back-to-back, with the doorways arranged in the outer walls. The ovens were then covered with dirt and rubble, with a railroad track above the battery to allow workers to charge the ovens with coal. A separate railroad track extended along the outside walls of a battery, placed at a lower level to allow coke to be shoveled out of the ovens and into cars or coke-racks. The railroad tracks were removed at an unknown date, after the coke ovens ceased operations in 1924, and are no longer extant. At its peak, the LaFollette Coal, Iron, and Railway Company listed their capacity at 293 ovens, and stated that the ovens operated continuously and consumed every pound of low-grade coal produced by the mines.²

2. West battery coke ovens (c.1900) (Contributing Structure)

The west battery is located south of present-day Ivydell Road and north of present-day Water Plant Road, and extends in an east-west direction. It is currently located on land owned by the Campbell County Historical Society. The eastern-most point of the battery begins approximately 450 feet west of the area where the CSX railroad crosses Ivydell Road, or approximately 800 feet west of the intersection of Ivydell Road and Highway 25W. The west battery is approximately 600 feet long and twenty to thirty feet wide.

² John P. Van Huss, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell: Campbell County, Tennessee* (LaFollette: Campbell County Historical Society, 1998), 29.

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As a dual battery, the original coke ovens were arranged back-to-back, with doorways in the exterior walls. The semi-circular exterior openings, averaging six feet wide and three to four feet tall, are open to the elements in their contemporary state (*Photograph 3*). When in use for coking, they were enclosed with brick and plastered shut. In the top of the dome, a round vent allowed for oxygen flow and a metal lid could be cracked to adjust the amount of draft into the oven. The metal lids are no longer extant, and the round openings are obscured by the large amount of growth above the ovens. Trees, vines, and other vegetation have covered the top of the battery, obscuring the round vents on each oven (*Photograph 4*). Vegetative growth has also spread along the flat swath of land immediately adjacent to the oven openings, where a second railroad track was once fitted with coke-racks, onto which the cooled coke could be pulled and moved away from the ovens.

The north side of the west battery originally featured a mechanical coke puller.³ Instead of a system involving a worker using an iron tool to pull finished coke out of the ovens, the Company could utilize a rail-mounted, electric-powered tool that would insert a plate under the fired and cooled coke. The tool would then withdraw the coke onto a steel conveyor, which would extend to the coke-racks on the adjoining train. No details of this mechanical coke puller are extant.

In its contemporary state, the south side of the west battery is substantially more intact than the north side. The majority of the individual oven openings are extant, showing wide brick arches topped by a layer of earth. Some moss growth is visible on the brick arches (*Photograph 6*). The interiors of the ovens are also intact, and clearly depict a previous period of heavy use. The concentric circles of brick show a range of colors, from grey and dark brown towards the bottom, moving to a dark beige in the middle, and a red-brown at the top (*Photograph 7, Photograph 8*). The layers of brick are fused together and covered in a byproduct of coal-burning that resembles a shiny shellac texture; this layering results from decades of sheltering and absorbing the effects of coke production (*Photograph 15*). Floors are covered in dirt, ash, and other by-products of burning coal.

The north side of the west battery is much more difficult to distinguish from its surrounding context of vines, tall grasses, and immature-growth trees. Standing on present-day Ivydell Road and facing south, one can distinguish the row of coke ovens as a tall embankment that rises above the road, after a fifteen foot swath of flat land (*Photograph 11*). Approximately ten ovens are visible as open space within the vegetative cover; however, the openings lack the visible arches and accessible interior views of the south side of the battery.

3. West battery retaining wall (c.1900)

(Contributing Structure)

A stacked-stone retaining wall extends the full length of the south elevation of the west battery. The wall features dry-stacked, slightly rusticated limestone, square-cut in varying widths and lengths, and arranged in irregular courses. The stone wall is approximately five feet tall. The retaining wall serves to delineate the location of the sunken railroad tracks used for removal of the finished coke product (*Photograph 1*).

The wall remains in relatively good condition, still retaining the built-up land surrounding the coke ovens with minimal missing stones (*Photograph 9*). Patches of moss and discoloration are visible on areas of the wall, but the majority of the stones are free of vegetative growth or other natural intrusions. The stone wall is not extant on the north side of the west battery, or is entirely covered with trees and vegetation.

³ Ibid., 30.

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4. East battery coke ovens (c.1900) (Contributing Structure)

The east battery coke ovens are located on the east side of the present-day CSX railroad, between the railroad and Highway 25W. The ovens are currently located on privately-owned land. More numerous than the west battery, two dual center batteries extend in a northeasterly direction from Ivydell Road and are currently located on both sides of a gravel road, aptly named Coke Oven Lane. On the west side of Coke Oven Lane, the battery begins approximately thirty-five feet north of Ivydell Road. The southernmost point of the battery on the east side of Coke Oven Lane is more difficult to discern due to the ovens' deteriorated state, but aerial photography indicates that the ovens begin approximately eighty feet north of Ivydell Road. The vegetation covering the ovens also makes it difficult to determine how long or wide they are, but since they were constructed in the same materials, style, and time as the west ovens, it can be assumed they are approximately twenty to thirty feet wide.

Similar to the west battery, the east battery of ovens is constructed as dual center batteries, featuring ovens arranged back-to-back with openings on both sides. In the east battery, two dual center battery coke ovens were constructed to run parallel to one another. The parallel ovens are spaced apart at a width that allowed one sunken railroad track to service two facing batteries. This way, coke could be pulled from the two rows of ovens facing inward by one team of workers, onto one track.

Overall, the east battery is in substantially more deteriorated condition than the west battery. On the west side of Coke Oven Lane, facing west, the first ovens visible from the road are partially collapsed (*Photograph 12*). The brick arches, topped by rubble, a rudimentary plaster, and a century of moss and vegetative cover, are exposed to the elements. The ovens' brick interiors are also largely exposed, with floors covered by grass and leaves (*Photograph 13*). Moving north away from Ivydell Road, several coke ovens have collapsed entirely. A poplar tree has grown on the top of one oven, with roots that extend along the brick arch towards the ground. Multiple ovens have been almost entirely infilled with dirt and debris, and only a portion of the brick interior is visible. The west side of the dual center battery is no longer accessible due to heavy vegetation and tree growth.

On the east side of Coke Oven Lane, the contemporary coke ovens are visible mainly as semi-circular openings amidst heavy vegetative cover. Looking north from Ivydell Road, it is near impossible to discern the existence of coke ovens; rather, a large embankment is covered by vegetation and punctuated with a few obscured openings (*Photograph 16*). Most of the ovens are completely collapsed, while several others are infilled with leaves and natural debris from the ground up. However, an interesting modification of the coke ovens is present at the far north end of this battery. Located immediately across the street from a private residence, a series of at least five coke ovens have been attentively landscaped (*Photograph 18*). Both the space between the ovens and the road and the land surrounding the brick-arched openings are covered in well-kept, even grass. Shrubbery and plants are arranged above the coke ovens, where the charging track once ran, and flowering trees fill the space where the coke-rack track once unloaded the finished product. Private owners arranged this portion of the east battery to resemble a garden, in stark contrast to the ovens' industrial roots and their largely deteriorated contemporary state. The east side of this battery is not accessible.

5. Washed-coal bunker foundation (c.1900) (Contributing Structure)

The washed-coal bunker foundation is represented by concrete ruins located at the intersection of present-day Ivydell Road and Water Plant Road. The westernmost point of the foundation is approximately forty feet

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west of Water Plant Road, and the ruins extend approximately 115 feet west along Ivydell Road. There are two elevated concrete sections that comprise the washed-coal bunker foundation ruins, separated by an approximate eight foot-wide span (*Photograph 19*). Both are approximately thirteen feet tall, the south section is approximately fifteen feet wide, and the north section is approximately three wide. An elevated coal storage bin was supported by the concrete foundations, though it was constructed of wood and is no longer extant (*Figure 17*). Serving both batteries of coke ovens, the washed-coal bunker was once a central point of the entire mining operation.

The wider portion of the foundation (the south section) is separated from the narrow portion by an open span of land. The south section, a wide, solid concrete wall, supported the end of an elevated railroad track. The railroad track would be loaded with clean coal from the overhead bunker, and then run westward to the west battery of coke ovens to “charge” the ovens with coal to be burnt. A second railroad track extended between the two concrete foundation sections; here, trains passed below the bunker and hauled washed coal eastward to the east battery of coke ovens.

In its contemporary state, the washed-coal bunker is represented by a relatively intact concrete foundation. The most prominent cause of deterioration is vegetation; numerous trees have grown in the open span between the two sections, extending limbs and vines across the concrete foundation. Because the north side of the foundation receives less sunlight, moss has grown along the concrete façade. Vines and some graffiti are visible on the south side of the foundation (*Photograph 20*). Some delamination is visible in the concrete layers on the east and south elevations.

6. Stone abutment ruins (Contributing Structure)

Located on the southwest side of Big Creek and the west side of the present-day CSX railroad are three stone foundations, one on each side of the creek and one in the middle (*Photograph 25*). These structures are ruins of the abutments for the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company’s dual railroad bridges. Originally, a steel, one-span bridge extended over Big Creek to provide access to the Rex #1 coal mine, and a second wooden, two-span bridge crossed the creek towards the east coke ovens.⁴

The foundation ruins on each side of Big Creek are stone masses, each with stepped areas that lead down towards the water. The middle ruin is a rectangular, stone and concrete massing that extends out of the center of Big Creek. All of these ruins show some delamination of the concrete and stone, and moss covering the tops and sides.

⁴ Van Huss, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell*, 4.

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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

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

c. 1897-1924

Significant Dates

1897; 1901

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph

The LaFollette Coke Ovens are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for significance at the local level, under the areas of industry, engineering, and commerce. Originating in the early 1890s, when Harvey LaFollette bought the 30,000-acre tract that would comprise the mining operation, the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company was officially incorporated in 1901. The period of significance for the LaFollette Coke Ovens site begins c. 1897, when the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company began to purchase and develop the land that would become the site for the coke production operations, and lasts until 1924, when the coke ovens were closed and abandoned. The coke ovens are the last remaining representation of the thriving coal, iron, and railroad industry that is inextricably linked to the origins and early development of the town of LaFollette, Tennessee. Both the ovens' construction and their efficient production of coke connect them with a complex system of engineering employed throughout the Cumberland Plateau and East Tennessee in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Along with the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company's two coal mines, iron furnace, and limestone quarry, the coke ovens produced a desirable product that allowed Campbell County residents to successfully thrive in state and regional commerce for at least two decades. While the LaFollette Coke Ovens have been challenged by the effects of time and natural decay, they retain significant aspects of integrity, especially in terms of location, design, workmanship, and materials. Due to the nature of the site, the LaFollette Coke Ovens could also possibly be eligible under Criterion D; however, no archaeological investigations have yet been performed on the site and this nomination does not address that criterion.

Narrative Statement of Significance

Campbell County and LaFollette at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

Founded from portions of Anderson and Claiborne Counties in September 1806, the twenty-sixth county in Tennessee was named for Colonel Arthur Campbell, a Revolutionary War soldier. Throughout the county's first decades, early settlement was defined by the surrounding mountains and generally limited to the fertile Powell's Valley.⁵ The nineteenth-century economy was defined by subsistence agriculture and timber harvesting, though the county's mineral resources were slowly but certainly recognized. During the War of 1812, New Mammoth Cave (west of present-day Jellico) was mined for saltpeter.⁶ While the surrounding mountains of the Cumberland Plateau were recognized as rich in coal and iron deposits in the early nineteenth century, large-scale extraction did not commence until the 1880s and 1890s, and the county remained predominately rural. Jacksboro, the county seat, was founded in 1807, and the town of Jellico was not founded until 1885.⁷

Named for a natural pass through the mountains carved by Big Creek, the area that would become LaFollette was originally owned by a farmer named John Douglas. Around 1889, several interested investors from Frankfort, Kentucky, purchased the land and established a town named Big Creek Gap.⁸ The land was

⁵ Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture, "Campbell County," accessed March 24, 2016, <http://tennesseeencyclopedia.net/entry.php?rec=184>.

⁶ Larry E. Matthews, "Chapter 6: New Mammoth Cave, " *Caves of Knoxville and the Great Smoky Mountains* (Huntsville, National Speleological Society, 2008), 117–130.

⁷ Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture, "Campbell County."

⁸ National Register of Historic Places, *LaFollette House*, Campbell County, Tennessee, National Register #75001736.

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transferred to a new owner relatively quickly; in the early 1890s, an Indiana-based educator and engineer named Harvey LaFollette purchased over 30,000 acres of land, intending to profit from its vast iron and coal resources.⁹ LaFollette envisioned a wide-reaching industrial system that incorporated multiple iron and coal mines, a blast furnace, coke ovens, and railroads. Harvey LaFollette spent the 1890s developing the backbone of industrial success. He planned and developed a city to support his business activities, and the post office for the Town of Big Creek Gap was re-named the Town of LaFollette in 1894.¹⁰ In 1897, Harvey LaFollette had connected the town to the Southern Railway line by completing eleven miles of rail track to nearby Vasper, Tennessee. In 1901, the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company was officially incorporated.¹¹ In 1900, the town’s population was 366, and it rose to 3,056 by 1920. The LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company provided the infrastructure and economic stimulus necessary for the development of the town of LaFollette and the livelihood of its residents throughout the early twentieth century.

Coal Mining in the Cumberland Plateau and East Tennessee

The LaFollette Coke Ovens are a standing representation of the most significant industrial undertaking to define Campbell County in the region’s history. The coke ovens, and the development of the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company, also fit within the overall evolution of industrial coal mining and related practices in the Cumberland Plateau region of Tennessee. A brief exploration of the history of coal mining in the Cumberland Plateau and East Tennessee will allow for a clearer understanding of the LaFollette Coke Ovens’ significance.

The Southern Appalachian mountain area was one of the few regions in the United States that was not fully transformed by the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century, though coal began to be mined in Tennessee as early as 1814. The earliest Tennessee coal mining operation was located in Roane County, within the Northern coalfield, which also contained the LaFollette mines. It was abandoned by 1856 due to the high cost of transporting coal by wagon.¹² Another early attempt at coal mining was in the Sale Creek area of Hamilton County. In Sale Creek, the company capitalized on the coal seam’s proximity to the river and shipped coal by barge. However, the transportation methods of road and river were slow, expensive, and rarely strong enough to hold the tons of coal that could potentially be excavated from the mines.

It wasn’t until the mid-nineteenth century that the completion of the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad allowed for new mining development on the Cumberland Plateau, by facilitating transportation of the finished product. In 1858, the first carload of coal was shipped to Nashville from Tracy City mines in Grundy County.¹³ The 1860s brought a decade-long hiatus in coal production throughout Tennessee. Economic and social obstacles posed by the Civil War caused numerous Tennessee coal mines to change hands, and many ceased production entirely.¹⁴ However, the burgeoning industry recovered quickly. In the

⁹ Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture, “Campbell County.”
¹⁰ Miller McDonald, *Campbell Co. TN: A History, Volume 1: Campbell Co. Jacksboro, Grantsboro, Walnut Grove, Demory, LaFollette, Well Spring* (LaFollette: Campbell County Historical Society, n.d.), 157.
¹¹ Van Huss, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell*, 6.
¹² James B. Jones, Jr, “The Development of Coal Mining on Tennessee’s Cumberland Plateau, 1880-1930” (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Commission, 1987), 3.
¹³ *Ibid.*, 4.
¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

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latter half of the nineteenth century and the early 1900s, the coal industry more than compensated for the period of decline during the war and ensuing Reconstruction Era.

The LaFollette coal mines and coke ovens originated within an era that transformed Campbell County and the surrounding region. In “The Development of Coal Mining on Tennessee’s Cumberland Plateau, 1880-1930,” Tennessee historian Dr. James B. Jones identifies the period of coal mining from 1869 to 1910 as the “time of railroad expansion.” In both the Northern and Southern coalfields, it became evident that “the key to the successful large-scale extraction of coal in Tennessee’s Cumberland Plateau was the building of railroads.”¹⁵ The Knoxville & Ohio railroad reached Anderson County by 1860, and the line was extended through the Jellico coal fields in Campbell County by 1881. The Cincinnati-Southern traversed Morgan, Roane, Rhea, and Hamilton Counties, while the Louisville & Nashville line extended into Campbell and Claiborne Counties during the 1890s. With the extension of major railroads, branch lines could provide access to areas not previously accessed by trains, such as Scott County.¹⁶ Such efficient means of access and transportation were inextricably connected to the founding of successful mining operations on the bountiful coal seams throughout these counties.

Coal was first discovered in Campbell County in the Jellico coalfield in 1853, and for the next two years, the county produced approximately 160 tons a year. No record of production exists again until 1873, when 14,773 tons were produced, far surpassing the previous rate. Such rapid growth would continue throughout the following decades; 125,000 tons of coke were produced in Jellico in 1884.¹⁷ The extension of the Knoxville & Ohio and the Louisville & Nashville Railroads allowed for the operation of five large coal mines in the Jellico area by the end of the 1890s.¹⁸ By 1896, Campbell County was the second highest ranked county in Tennessee terms of coal production.¹⁹ The growth of the mining industry in Campbell County would continue until the 1920s. Coal production increased rapidly as mining companies consolidated their organizations and new and larger mines were opened throughout the Cumberland Plateau. The Jellico mines were soon joined by several other large-scale operations in Campbell County, including the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company.

The LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company

Officially incorporated in 1901, the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company originated in the latter years of the 1890s. The company quickly became a complex industrial organization, capitalizing on the numerous resources of the Campbell County area. Brothers Harvey M. and Grant LaFollette extracted from a vertical iron ore seam that followed the foot of nearby Cumberland Mountain, a rock quarry with abundant

¹⁵ Ibid., 7.

¹⁶ Jones, “The Development of Coal Mining on Tennessee’s Cumberland Plateau, 1880-1930”, 9.

¹⁷ National Register of Historic Places, *Jellico Commercial Historic District*, Campbell County, Tennessee, National Register #99001344, 13.

¹⁸ Ronald D. Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930* (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1982), 80.

¹⁹ Bureau of Labor Statistics and Mines of the State of Tennessee. *8th Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Mines of the State of Tennessee for the Year Ending December 31, 1898*. (Nashville: Ambrose, 1899).

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limestone, and two coal mines, named Rex #1 and Rex #2. The LaFollettes also constructed a blast furnace, considered among the last operating iron furnaces in East Tennessee.²⁰

Both Rex #1 and Rex #2 mines were operated as slope mines, using rope hoists to pull mine cars to the surface, with a railroad extending through both mines.²¹ The Rex #1 mine portal was located on an eastern fork of Big Creek, immediately below the L&N railroad track. The portal for Rex #2 was located north and west, on a middle fork of Big Creek. In 1903, the Rex #1 mine was fully operating, while the Rex #2 mine was still in “a prospective stage.”²² The secondary structures necessary for coal extraction, storage, and transportation (such as tipples and powerhouses) were located immediately adjacent to both mines. Since the portals were separated by a substantial distance, the mines required two of each secondary structure, with one constructed for Rex #1 and one for Rex #2.

The railway branch of the organization utilized its own full-size, steam locomotives, with multiple lines to connect the mines with the rest of the enterprise. The company even generated their own electricity.²³ Thus, the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company operated an enormous enterprise, “a complex mammoth operation with interdependent divisions.”²⁴ Save for the coke ovens and a few ruins in their immediate vicinity, none of the numerous, often enormous, structures built by the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company are extant today.

Coke Production and Coke Ovens

Coke ovens were a necessary element of a thriving coal mining operation, and an integral factor in the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company’s success. Coke, a residue of coal left after “distillation or partial combustion of bituminous coal in ovens,” was an efficient use of lesser-grade coal extracted from nearby seams.²⁵ Instead of wasting the less profitable types of coal, a company could utilize a simple burning process to produce a product crucial in the production of pig iron. If, in the case of the LaFollette enterprise, the coal mining company also had a blast furnace for iron production on site, coke was even more helpful.

The LaFollette Coke Ovens utilized a beehive shape “used exclusively in Tennessee” in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.²⁶ Beehive ovens, so named for their dome shape, originated in eighteenth-century England, near the town of Durham. The ovens were built in single or double batteries, constructed against a natural land bank or retaining wall, and the spaces surrounding the rounded ovens were infilled with dirt or other natural materials. The brick walls were built with a round hole at the top for loading (or “charging”)

²⁰ Van Huss, *A Suggested Restoration of the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Co. Coke Ovens*, 3.

²¹ *Ibid.*, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell*, 13. Figure 2 (p. 3) shows that the locations for Rex #1 and Rex #2 mines were located outside the National Register boundary for the nominated property.

²² Bureau of Labor Statistics and Mines of the State of Tennessee. *13th Annual Report of the Mining Department: 1901, 1902, and 1903*. R.A. Shiflett, Chief Mine Inspector (Nashville: McQuiddy Printing Company, 1904).

²³ Van Huss, *A Suggested Restoration of the LaFollette Coal, Iron & Railway Co. Coke Ovens* (LaFollette: Campbell County Historical Society, 2003), 3.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

²⁵ Jones, “The Development of Coal Mining on Tennessee’s Cumberland Plateau, 1880-1930”, 35.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

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coal and releasing exhaust fumes while burning. An opening in the front was also necessary for removal of the finished product. Typical coke ovens in Tennessee were generally six feet tall, with an outside diameter of twelve feet. Coke ovens were constructed near the source of coal to reduce transportation challenges, and they were always located next to railroad tracks.²⁷ For one battery of ovens to operate, two sets of railroad tracks were necessary to load the coal into the tops of the ovens, and remove the finished product.

In 1897, as the LaFollette Company was beginning to purchase land for their large enterprise, Tennessee had fifteen coke-producing establishments, with 1,948 coke ovens constructed that year.²⁸ The exact construction date of the LaFollette Coke Ovens is unclear, but by 1903, all 293 ovens were in operation, and eighty-eight of those ovens had been built in the year 1903.²⁹ The 293 ovens were spread into east and west sections, with the east section operating two parallel double batteries and the west section consisting of one double battery. These ovens were complemented by the necessary secondary structures, including two rail lines, a coal washer, and a washed-coal bunker for storage of the coal intended to be burnt for coke. According to the 1903 Mining Department report, the majority of coal was washed before being utilized for coke production; the washing process “greatly facilitate[d] the coking process, and produce[d] a better quality of coke than would otherwise be obtained.”³⁰ The LaFollette Coke Ovens benefitted from the numerous secondary structures in place for coke production, and became greatly successful.

In 1903, the LaFollette ovens reported 360 days of active burning of the 293 ovens, employing thirteen coal pullers, fourteen “helpers,” and fifteen other miscellaneous laborers involved in the process.³¹ This efficient system of production allowed Campbell County to move from fifth to third place in the ranks of coke-producing Tennessee counties in 1903. By 1909, the LaFollette ovens were valued at \$205,000, and had produced 3,609 short tons of coke in a year.³² The ovens continued operating at a high rate throughout the following decade, with the annual coke production valued at \$451,795 by 1920.³³ In 1922, Campbell County had moved to the top of coal-producing counties in Tennessee, and coke production was equally successful. The LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company’s profitable enterprises continued until 1924, when the iron furnace closed and the coke ovens were abandoned. A substantial portion, if not all, of the coke produced in the LaFollette coke ovens was utilized in the Company’s on-site blast furnace, so the closing of the furnace prompted the eventual abandonment of the coke ovens. The ovens’ stone facing and the cast-iron doors were quickly removed and re-purposed by area residents and other visitors to the site, and trees and vegetation engulfed the batteries.³⁴

²⁷ Ibid., 36.

²⁸ Bureau of Labor Statistics and Mines of the State of Tennessee, *8th Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics and Mines of the State of Tennessee for the Year Ending December 31, 1898*.

²⁹ Ibid., *13th Annual Report of the Mining Department: 1901, 1902, and 1903*.

³⁰ Ibid., 60.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Bureau of Labor Statistics and Mines of the State of Tennessee. *19th Annual Report of the Mining Department: 1909*. R.A. Shiflett, Chief Mine Inspector (Nashville: McQuiddy Printing Company).

³³ Bureau of Labor Statistics and Mines of the State of Tennessee. *20th Annual Report of the Mining Department: 1910*. (Nashville: McQuiddy Printing Company).

³⁴ Van Huss, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell*, 30.

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Coke Ovens on the Cumberland Plateau and in East Tennessee

The construction and use of the LaFollette coke ovens finds a parallel in the coke ovens found on mining sites throughout the Cumberland Plateau and the East Tennessee area. Some of the earliest beehive coke ovens built in Tennessee were constructed in 1859 at the Tracy City mining site in Grundy County (NRHP, 4/1/1987). The first iron fueled by Tennessee coke occurred in Tracy City in the mid-1870s.³⁵ However, most coke ovens were constructed in a similar time frame as the LaFollette ovens, built at the turn of the twentieth century and operating to their fullest potential in the early 1900s.

As reported by the Tennessee Mining Department in 1903, Rhea, Roane, Campbell, Morgan, and Marion counties were the top producers of coke in terms of both quantity and financial value.³⁶ The coke produced in LaFollette and throughout Tennessee was “practically all consumed in the iron furnaces at LaFollette, Knoxville, Rockwood, South Pittsburg, Dayton, and Chattanooga.”³⁷ It is interesting to compare this list of iron furnaces, detailed in a 1903 report of the Tennessee Mining Department, to a list of all Tennessee counties concurrently operating coke ovens: Campbell, Claiborne, Cumberland, Grundy, Hamilton, Marion, Morgan, Rhea, Roane, Scott, Sequatchie, and White. On the whole, these coke-producing counties correspond in location to the iron furnaces utilizing the final product, and it can be assumed that the coke did not travel far to be utilized.

The Dunlap Coke Ovens (NRHP, 7/5/1985) were built in Sequatchie County, which is ranked #11 on the 1903 list of coke-producing counties. At this site, the Douglas Coal & Coke Company operated 268 beehive-style coke ovens, divided into one single battery of thirty-eight ovens and multiple double batteries containing 230 ovens. The Dunlap Coke Ovens were abandoned in the 1920s. The Marion County mines and coke ovens operated by the McNabb Coal & Coke Company (NRHP, 3/26/2008), originated in the 1880s and operated on-and-off until approximately 1910. Similar beehive ovens were also utilized at the Glen Mary mining operation in Scott County. Along with similar construction techniques, what these sites share with the LaFollette enterprise is a similar evolution: a period of boom-and-bust that defined the coal mining industry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These coke ovens were constructed alongside the rise of coal mining on the Cumberland Plateau, inherently relied on new routes of railroad transportation, and quickly fell into disuse when mining operations exhausted their resources, whether mineral or financial.

The Decline of the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company

Throughout the early twentieth century, the increasing demand for inexpensive coal was met by a steady opening of new mines in the Southern Appalachian Mountains. Opening mines required relatively low start-up costs, and markets were drawn to the finished product of Southern coal, which was often of a higher quality than coal extracted from northern mountain seams. Miners in the South were, on the whole, paid lower wages, and the convict work system (utilized in nearby mines operated by Brushy Mountain State Penitentiary) offered another inexpensive contrast to Northern labor, which was often defined by unions. From 1909-1919, the number of coal mines in the United States increased by more than 33%, and the

³⁵ Jones, “The Development of Coal Mining on Tennessee’s Cumberland Plateau, 1880-1930”, 5.
³⁶ Bureau of Labor Statistics and Mines of the State of Tennessee, *13th Annual Report of the Mining Department: 1901, 1902, and 1903*, 59.
³⁷ *Ibid.*, 60.

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majority of those were located in the South.³⁸ Coal production in the United States reached its apex in 1923, followed quickly by a sharp decrease in demand that initiated a widespread decline in the coal market. Though southern Appalachian coal mines continued production, providing approximately 80% of the nation's bituminous coal output as late as 1930, these mines also experienced a substantial depression as early as 1927.³⁹ The first mines to close were smaller operations, as larger companies reduced their workforce and decreased production. Mines were boarded up, company towns were slowly abandoned, and the support structures were left to deteriorate.

The mines operated by the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company followed a similar trajectory of decline. The LaFollette iron furnace was one of the last furnaces in East Tennessee, and closed in 1924. Jim Sterchi, a Knoxville businessman, purchased the property and named it Industrial Properties; however, this business endeavor failed and the property was sold at public auction in 1934. The iron furnace was sold for scrap in the late 1930s, and the remaining metals were salvaged throughout World War II. The iron ore mines collapsed in the 1930s.⁴⁰ As the iron furnace closed, so did the coke ovens that fed it. In the mid-1920s, the ovens were abandoned and left to the elements. The Rex #1 mine closed for several years after 1924, but reopened in March of 1928 under new management of the Francis Brothers. It operated through the Great Depression, until it exhausted "the limits of its underground haulage equipment" and closed in 1933.⁴¹ The roof-support pillars of the mine were removed, and the mine was allowed to collapse. The Rex #2 mine sat idle at different times from Rex #1, but was recognized to be a more productive mine in the 1930s; the Francis Brothers constructed a new tippie as late as 1932 and re-opened the mine in 1933. It was managed by the NuRex Coal Company from 1946 to its closure in 1950.⁴² The mining community named Ivydell that had grown up around the LaFollette operation similarly experienced a decline. The area surrounding the mines served as a garbage dump for the city of LaFollette in the mid- to late-twentieth century, with a city water plant and a dog pound also located near the west battery of coke ovens. Neither the dump nor the water plant are currently in operation.

Contemporary State and Integrity

In their contemporary state, the LaFollette Coke Ovens and associated ruins are the only extant structures to represent the enormous, wide-reaching enterprise begun in the late 1890s by the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company. The coke ovens belonged to a complex and interrelated industrial system that included an iron ore mine, a blast furnace, two coal mines, several rail lines, and all the associated secondary structures. Today, such a successful operation is represented by two batteries of coke ovens, the concrete foundation of a washed-coal bunker, and ruins of the stone abutments that supported the mine's rail track.

Contemporary scholarship regarding coal mining sites, including Dr. Jones's "The Development of Coal Mining on Tennessee's Cumberland Plateau, 1880-1930" and several Tennessee National Register nominations, recognize an inherent challenge in assessing the integrity of these sites. Coal mining sites,

³⁸ Jones, "The Development of Coal Mining on Tennessee's Cumberland Plateau, 1880-1930", 13.

³⁹ Eller, *Miners, Millhands, and Mountaineers: Industrialization of the Appalachian South, 1880-1930*, 157.

⁴⁰ Van Huss, *A Suggested Restoration of the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Co. Coke Ovens*, 3.

⁴¹ Van Huss, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell*, 16.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 26.

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including their support structures and surrounding company towns, “came into existence from necessity, flourished for a number of years, slowly died as the coal seams failed or economic conditions made them moribund, and were finally abandoned.”⁴³ Built for efficiency and heavy use, the structures relating to mining operations were not necessarily intended to exist in perpetuity. The mining structures were frequently built of wood, instead of materials expected to last and as in the case of LaFollette, more valuable materials such as stone and metal were quickly salvaged after the mines closed. The existence and maintenance of structures such as coke ovens “were a function of the coal supply, which was limited from the outset,” so applying the traditional criteria of integrity is a challenge. Jones notes that these buildings and structures “were built to lose integrity,” designed to aid in the removal and processing of a finite resource.⁴⁴ After the structures have accomplished their purpose, they are abandoned and allowed to deteriorate. What remains are ruins, covered by natural growth, small reminders of a once-thriving enterprise.

Nevertheless, the LaFollette Coke Ovens do retain significant aspects of integrity. The east and west battery of ovens, the washed-coal bunker foundation, and the stone abutment ruins all retain integrity of **location**, organized in a layout that reflects the complex mining operations. The beehive-style ovens, with their attentively-constructed brick interiors and the stone retaining wall below, demonstrate a strong integrity of **design**. The **workmanship** of the craftsmen involved in construction is evident in the fact that despite decades of neglect, the ovens stand today. The extant nature of the brick ovens, the stone retaining wall, and the stone abutment ruins is a strong testament to the **materials** involved in construction; the brick was selected to withstand heavy use and challenging conditions, and the local stone still functions as a retaining wall. Due to the transient nature of a mining site, with structures allowed to deteriorate or be salvaged after their purpose is accomplished, it is the integrity of **feeling** and **association** that is challenged. With the coke ovens obscured in places by trees and vegetation, it is difficult to intuit the full reach of the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company’s presence on the site today. However, this impediment is shared by the vestiges of mining sites not only on the Cumberland Plateau, but throughout the United States. The challenge inherent in associating contemporary ruins with their past significance only means a stronger effort is needed on the part of preservationists nationwide. Though challenged by the finite nature of its purpose, the LaFollette Coke Ovens retain strong overall integrity that allows it to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for historical significance.

⁴³ National Register of Historic Places, *McNabb Mines*, Marion County, Tennessee, National Register #08000236, 11.

⁴⁴ Jones, “The Development of Coal Mining on Tennessee’s Cumberland Plateau, 1880-1930”, 28-29.

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9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

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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 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 type="checkbox"/>	University
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #	Name of repository: Campbell Co. Historical Society	
Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):			

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property ~10 acres **USGS Quadrangle** Ivydell (136-NW)

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84:

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 36.397464 | Longitude: -84.127064 |
| 2. Latitude: 36.396955 | Longitude: -84.126299 |
| 3. Latitude: 36.395208 | Longitude: -84.126658 |
| 4. Latitude: 36.393775 | Longitude: -84.130261 |
| 5. Latitude: 36.395113 | Longitude: -84.131425 |
| 6. Latitude: 36.395822 | Longitude: -84.127611 |

Verbal Boundary Description

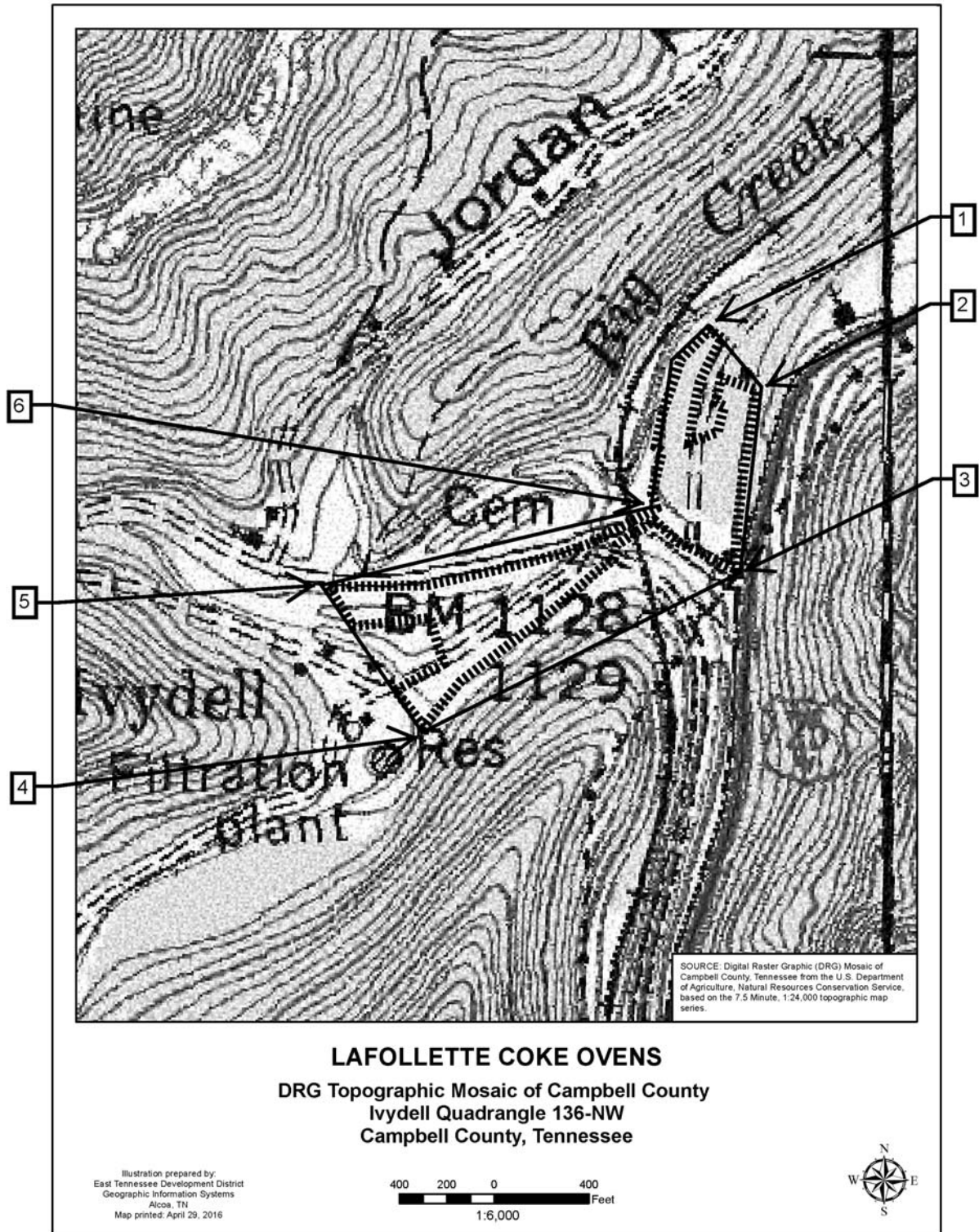
The boundary for the LaFollette Coke Ovens site encompasses approximately ten acres within Campbell County, Tennessee and is delineated by the polygon on the USGS map whose vertices are marked by the above latitude and longitude points. This land includes the five documented features associated with the nominated site.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries for the LaFollette Coke Ovens site were selected to encompass the last remaining features of the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company's late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century mining operations in the area. The boundaries include the west battery of coke ovens, the washed-coal bunker foundation, stone abutment ruins over Big Creek, two sections of the east battery of coke ovens that flank present-day Coke Oven Lane, and the land immediately surrounding these features.

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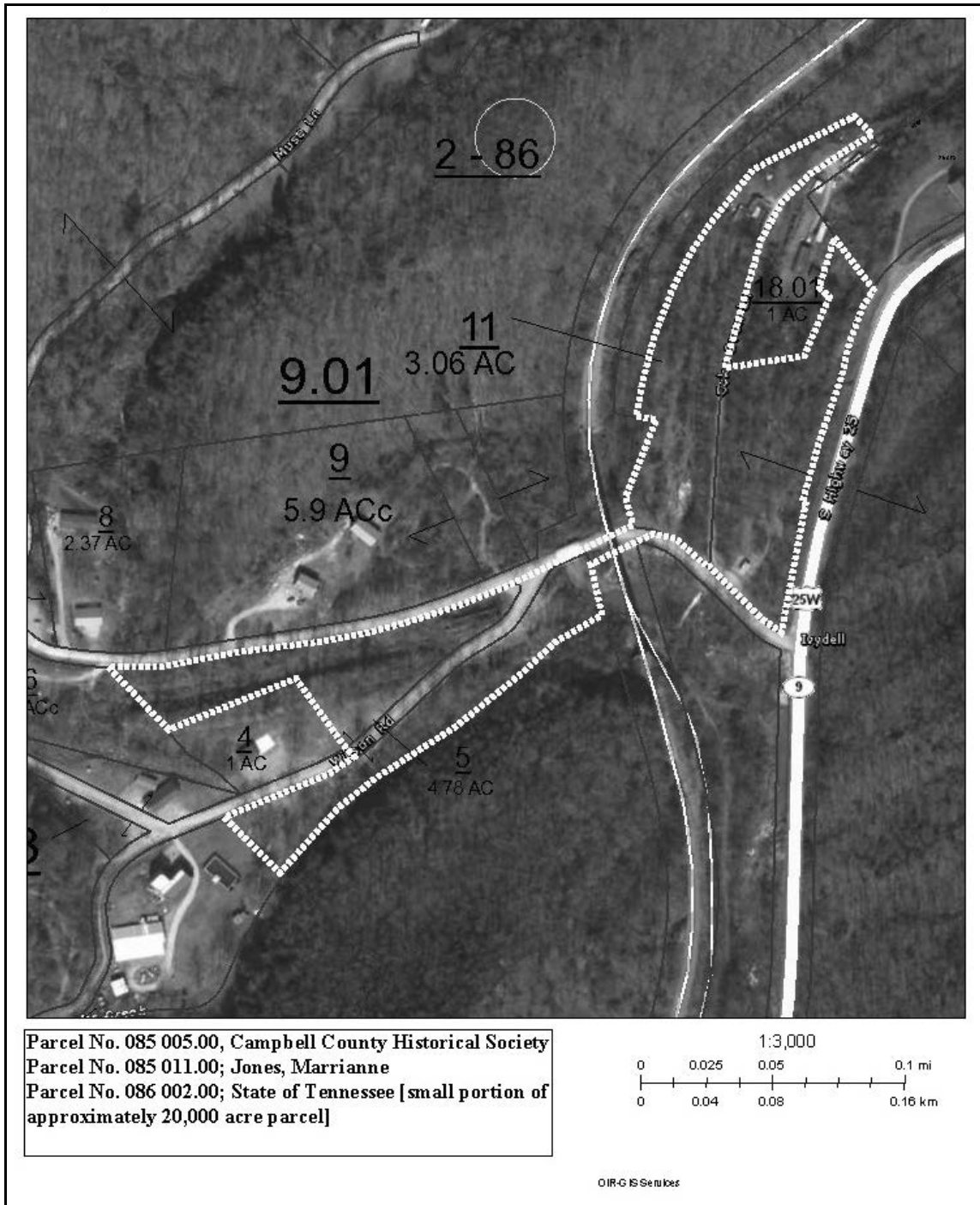
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Site boundary, 1973 USGS Topographic Map, Ivydell Quadrangle, 136-NW.

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LaFollette Coke Ovens site boundary. Excerpt from Campbell County Tax Assessor parcel maps.

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11. Form Prepared By

Name Lindsay Crockett, Historic Preservation Planner

Organization East Tennessee Development District

Street & Number 216 Corporate Place Date _____

City or Town Alcoa Telephone (865) 273-6003

E-mail lcrockett@etdd.org State TN Zip Code 37701

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: LaFollette Coke Ovens
City or Vicinity: LaFollette
County: Campbell State: Tennessee
Photographer: Lindsay Crockett
Date Photographed: March 29, 2016 and April 25, 2016

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 28. West battery of coke ovens and retaining wall, overview, south elevation. Photographer facing north.
- 2 of 28. West battery of coke ovens and retaining wall, overview, south elevation. Photographer facing northwest.
- 3 of 28. West battery of coke ovens, exterior, south elevation. Photographer facing north.
- 4 of 28. West battery of coke ovens, exterior, south elevation. Photographer facing northwest.
- 5 of 28. West battery of coke ovens, exterior, south elevation. Photographer facing north.
- 6 of 28. Detail, coke oven. West battery, exterior, south elevation. Photographer facing north.
- 7 of 28. Interior, coke oven, showing floor and brick dome. West battery, south elevation. Photographer facing north.
- 8 of 28. Interior, coke oven, showing brick dome and circular top opening. West battery, south elevation. Photographer facing north.
- 9 of 28. Retaining wall, west battery, south elevation. Photographer facing northwest.
- 10 of 28. Retaining wall stone detail, west battery, south elevation. Photographer facing northwest.
- 11 of 28. West battery of coke ovens, overview, north elevation. Photographer facing south.
- 12 of 28. East battery of coke ovens, overview, west side of street. Photographer facing west.
- 13 of 28. East battery of coke ovens, west side of street. Photographer facing west.
- 14 of 28. Detail, coke oven. East battery. Photographer facing west.
- 15 of 28. Brick detail, coke oven. East battery, interior. Photographer facing west.
- 16 of 28. East battery of coke ovens, overview, east side of street. Photographer facing northeast.

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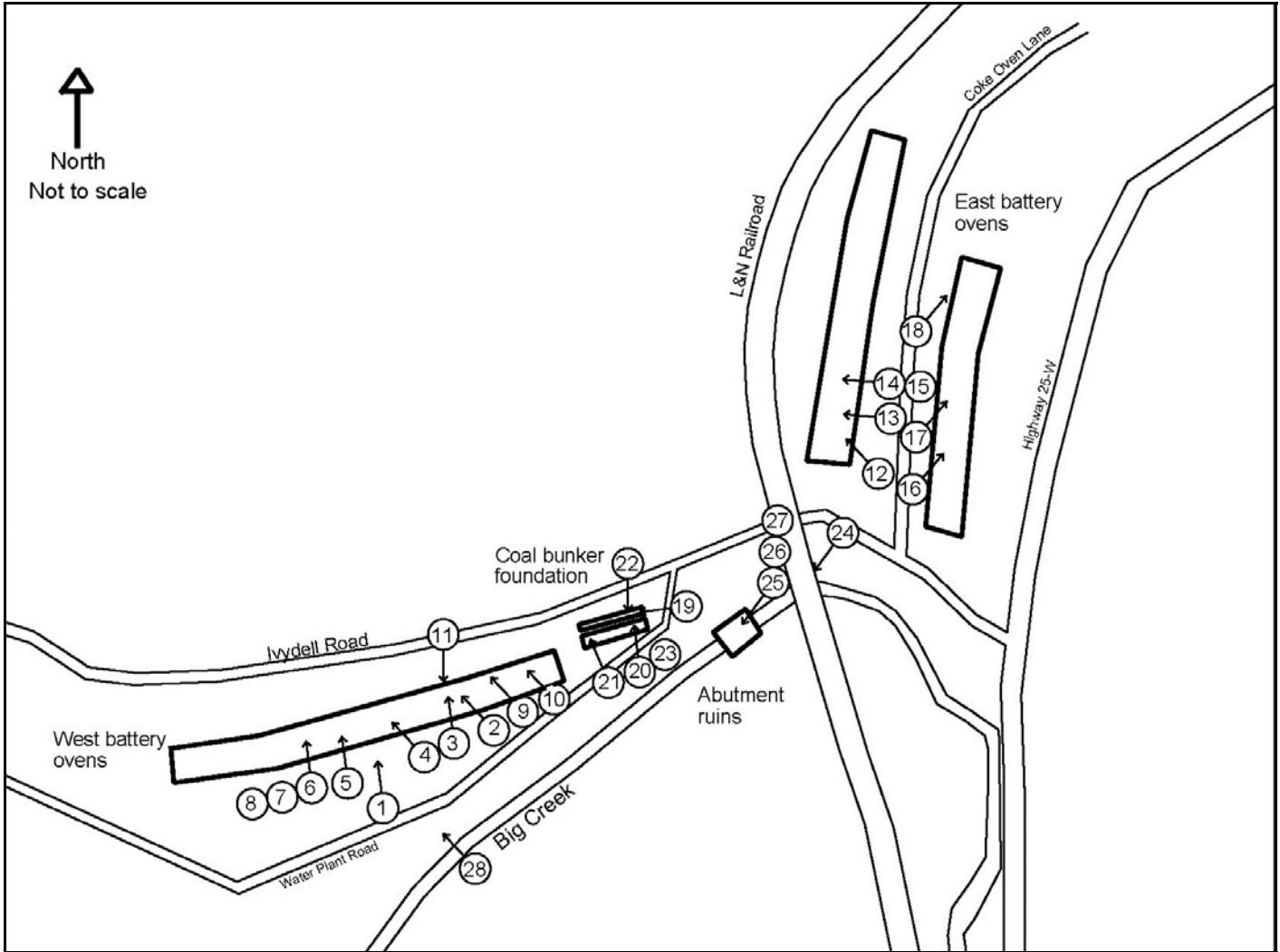
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-
- 17 of 28. East battery of coke ovens, east side of street. Photographer facing northeast.
- 18 of 28. East battery of coke ovens, east side of street. Photographer facing northeast.
- 19 of 28. Washed-coal bunker foundation, east elevation. Photographer facing west.
- 20 of 28. Washed-coal bunker foundation, south elevation. Photographer facing north.
- 21 of 28. Washed-coal bunker foundation, south elevation. Photographer facing northwest.
- 22 of 28. Washed-coal bunker foundation, north elevation. Photographer facing south.
- 23 of 28. Foundation detail, washed-coal bunker foundation. South elevation. Photographer facing north.
- 24 of 28. Stone railroad abutments and existing railroad track. Photographer facing southwest.
- 25 of 28. Stone abutment ruins. Photographer facing southwest.
- 26 of 28. Stone abutment ruins. Photographer facing southwest.
- 27 of 28. Stone abutment ruins. Photographer facing southwest.
- 28 of 28. Big Creek. Photographer facing northwest.

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Site Plan and Photo Key



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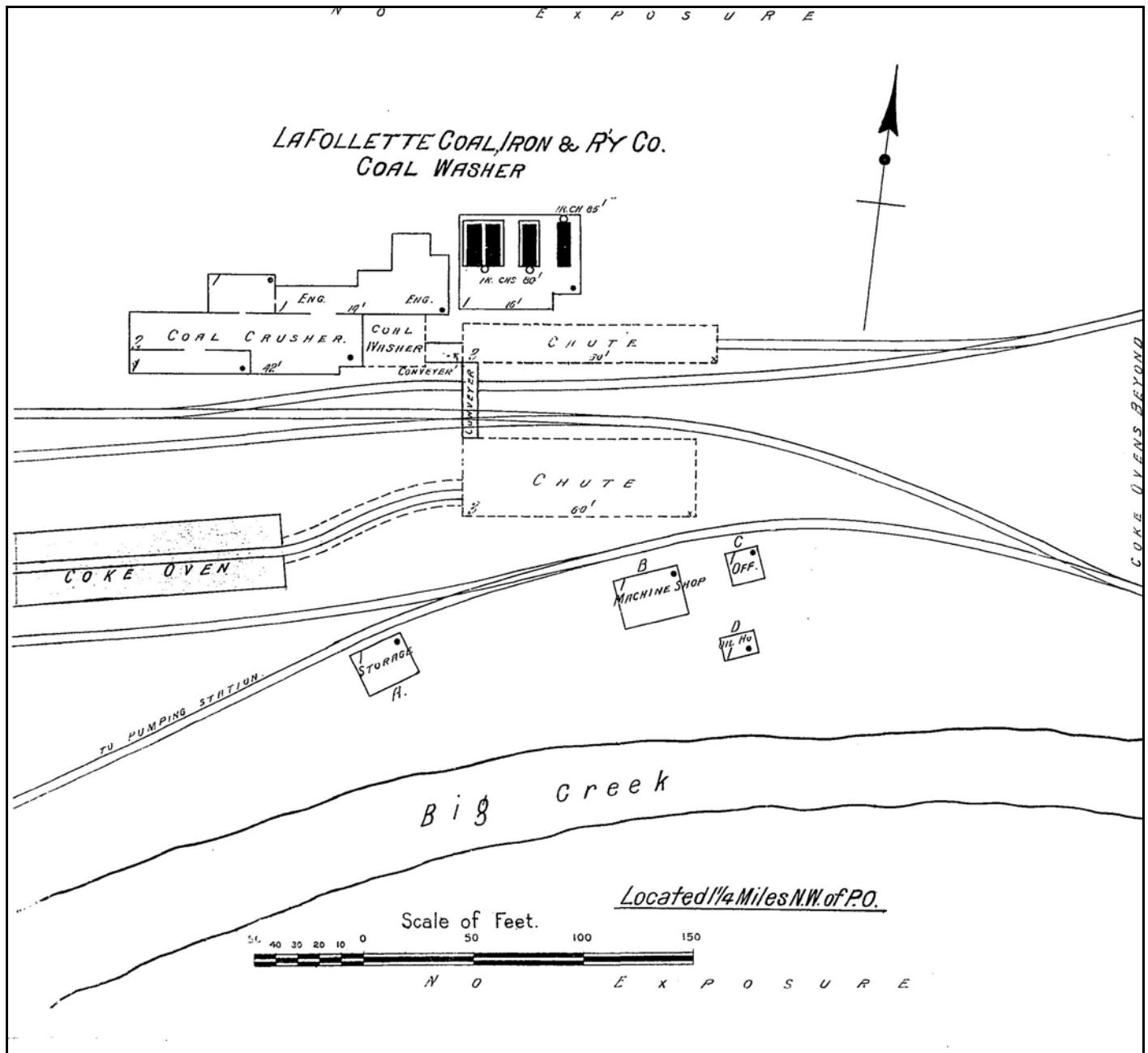


Figure 1: 1913 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing west coke oven battery, washed-coal bunker, and associated structures at LaFollette Coke Ovens.

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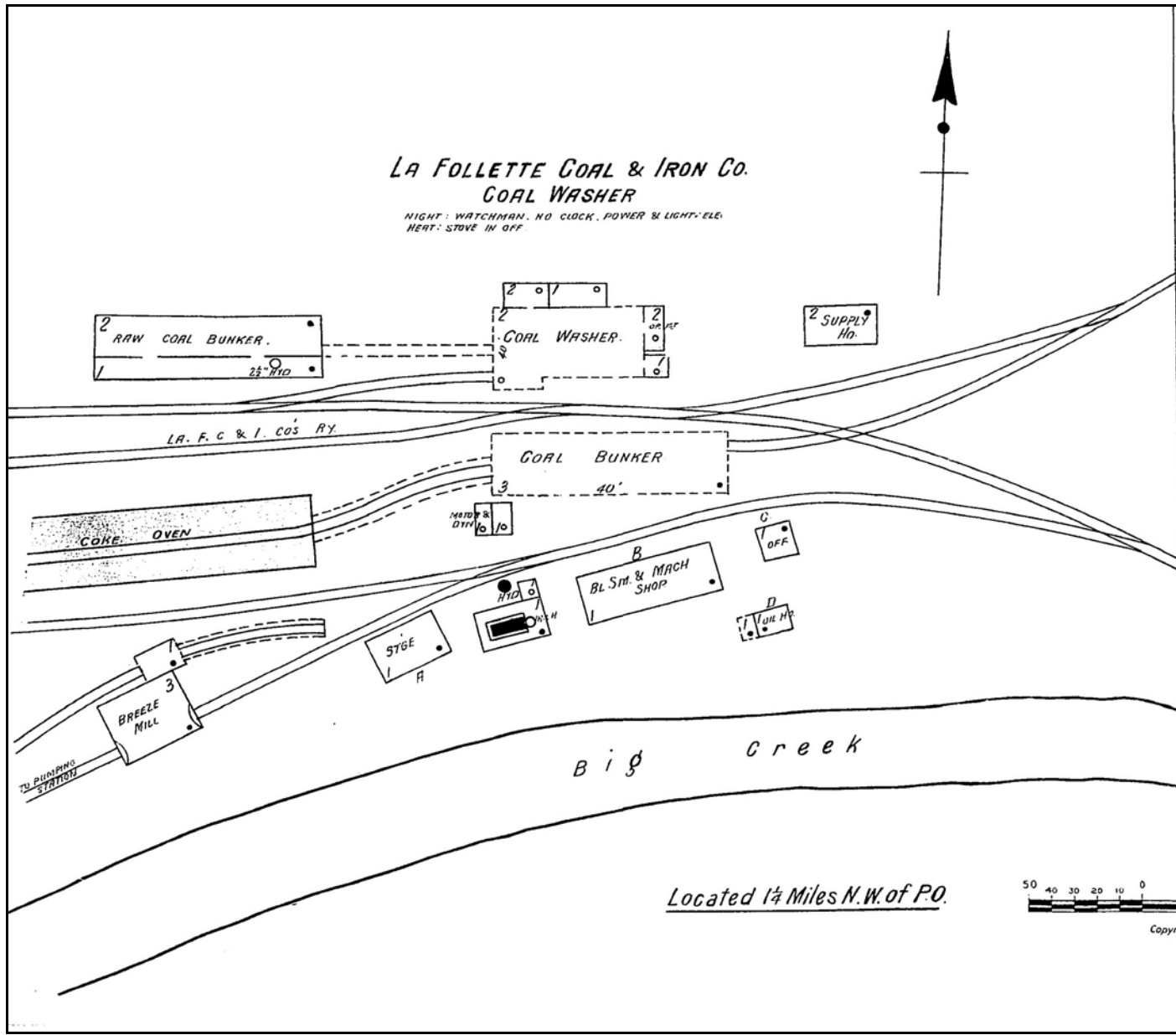


Figure 2: 1925 Sanborn Fire Insurance map showing west coke oven battery, washed-coal bunker, and associated structures at LaFollette Coke Ovens.

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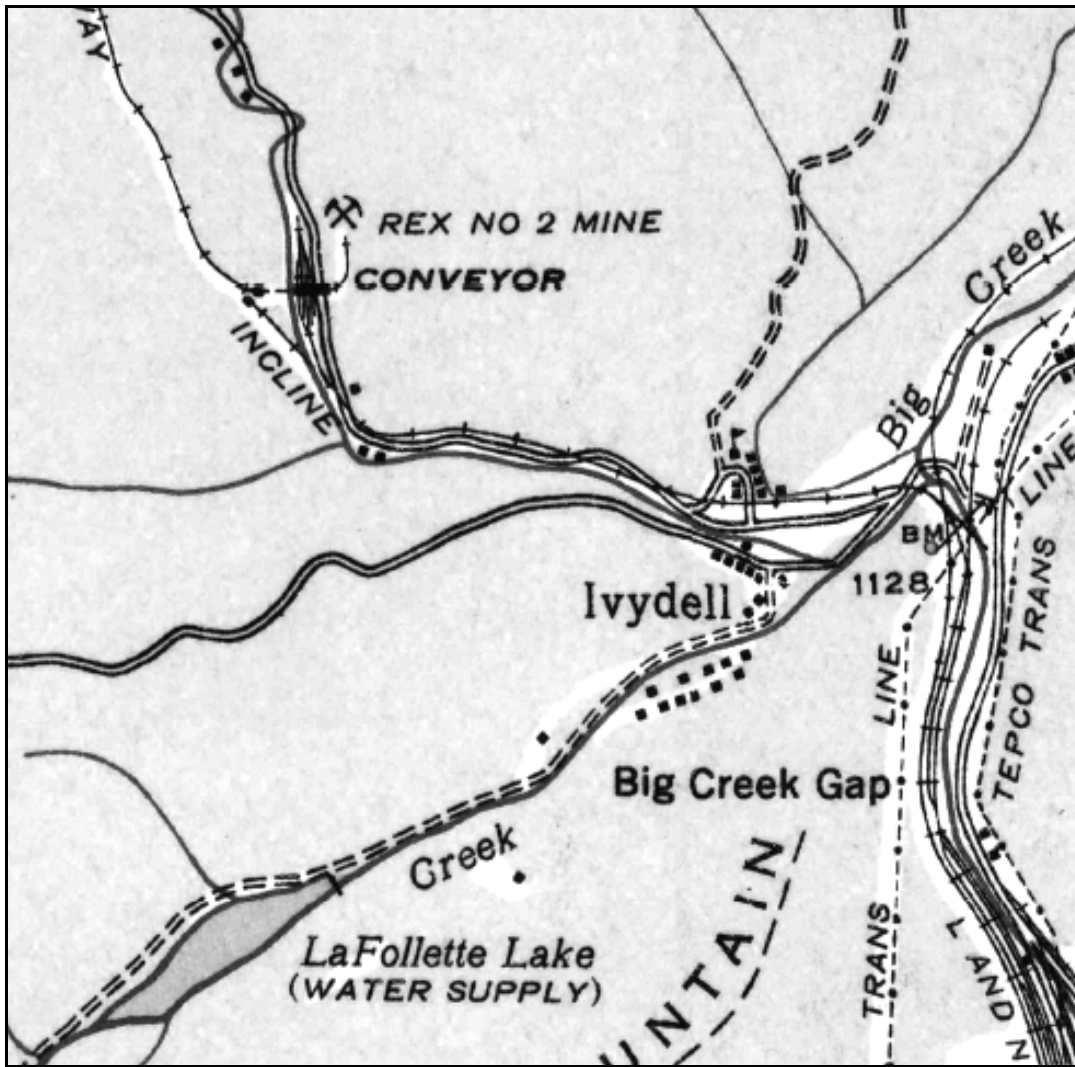


Figure 3: 1936 USGS Topographic Map, Ivydell quadrangle. Illustrates location of Rex #2 Mine and associated rail lines at LaFollette Coke Ovens.

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Figure 4: View of the Rex #1 Mine at LaFollette Coke Ovens, circa 1910.

View shows a tippel, the mine entry, and a railroad.

(Source: John Van Huss, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell*; Campbell County Historical Society)

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Figure 5: View of the Rex #2 Mine at LaFollette Coke Ovens, circa 1910.
The building in the front is the tippie, with a powerhouse building located beneath the two smokestacks.
(Source: John Van Huss, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell*; Campbell County Historical Society)

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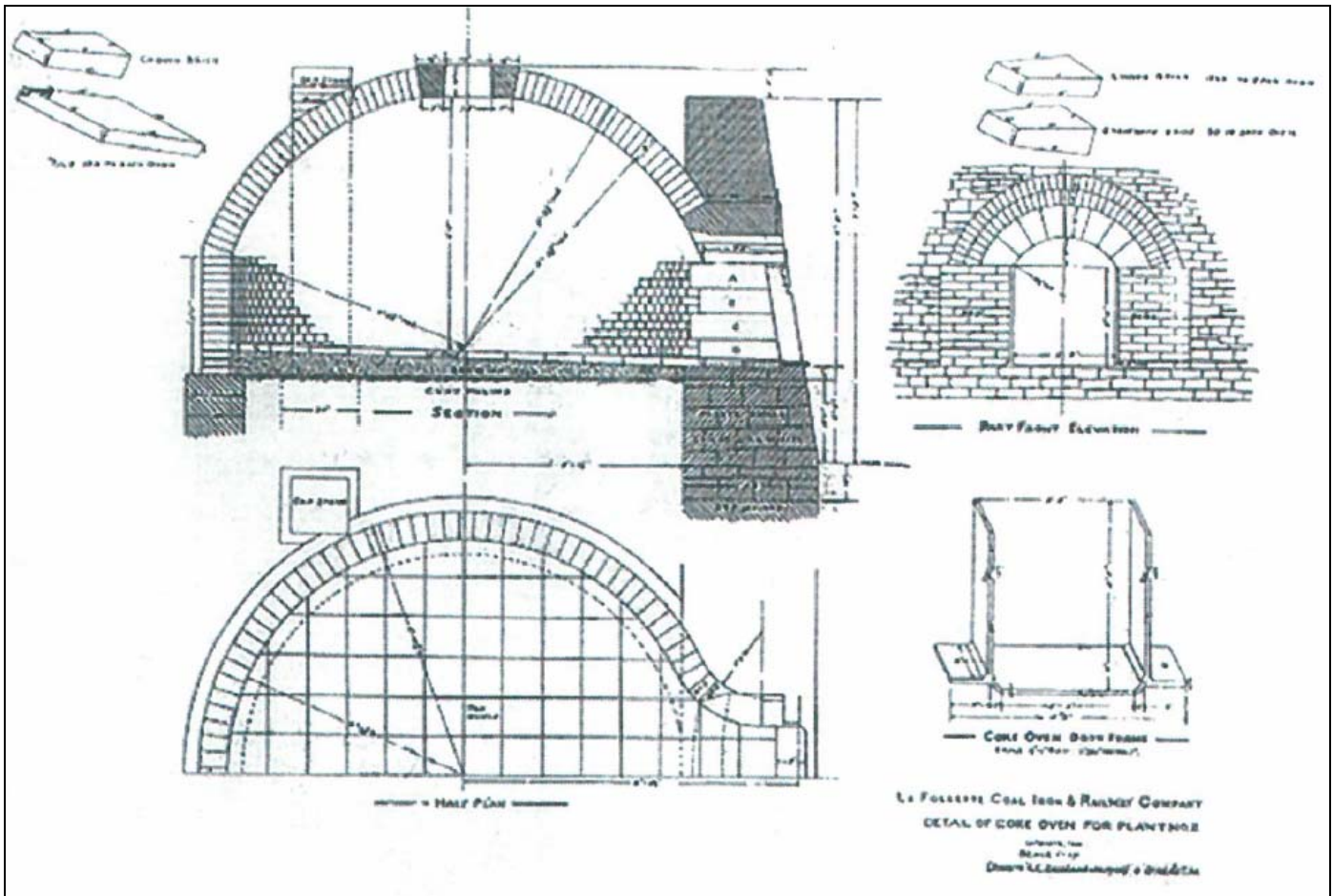


Figure 6: Measured drawings of coke ovens, from the LaFollette Coal, Iron, & Railway Company. (Source: John Van Huss, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell*; Campbell County Historical Society)

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Figure 7: Overview of LaFollette Coke Ovens complex, approximately 1910. The east coke ovens are located in the foreground, with the coal washer and washed-coal bunker located in the center of the photograph, behind the L&N trestle. The west coke ovens are behind the coal bunker.
(Source: John Van Huss, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell*; Campbell County Historical Society)

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Figure 8: View of the east coke oven batteries at LaFollette Coke Ovens from present-day Highway 25W, approximately 1915. Trains with coke-racks are located between the two batteries.
(Source: John Van Huss, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell*; Campbell County Historical Society)

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Figure 9: View of the east coke ovens at LaFollette Coke Ovens, facing south toward Big Creek Gap, approximately 1910.
(Source: John Van Huss, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell*; Campbell County Historical Society)

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Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

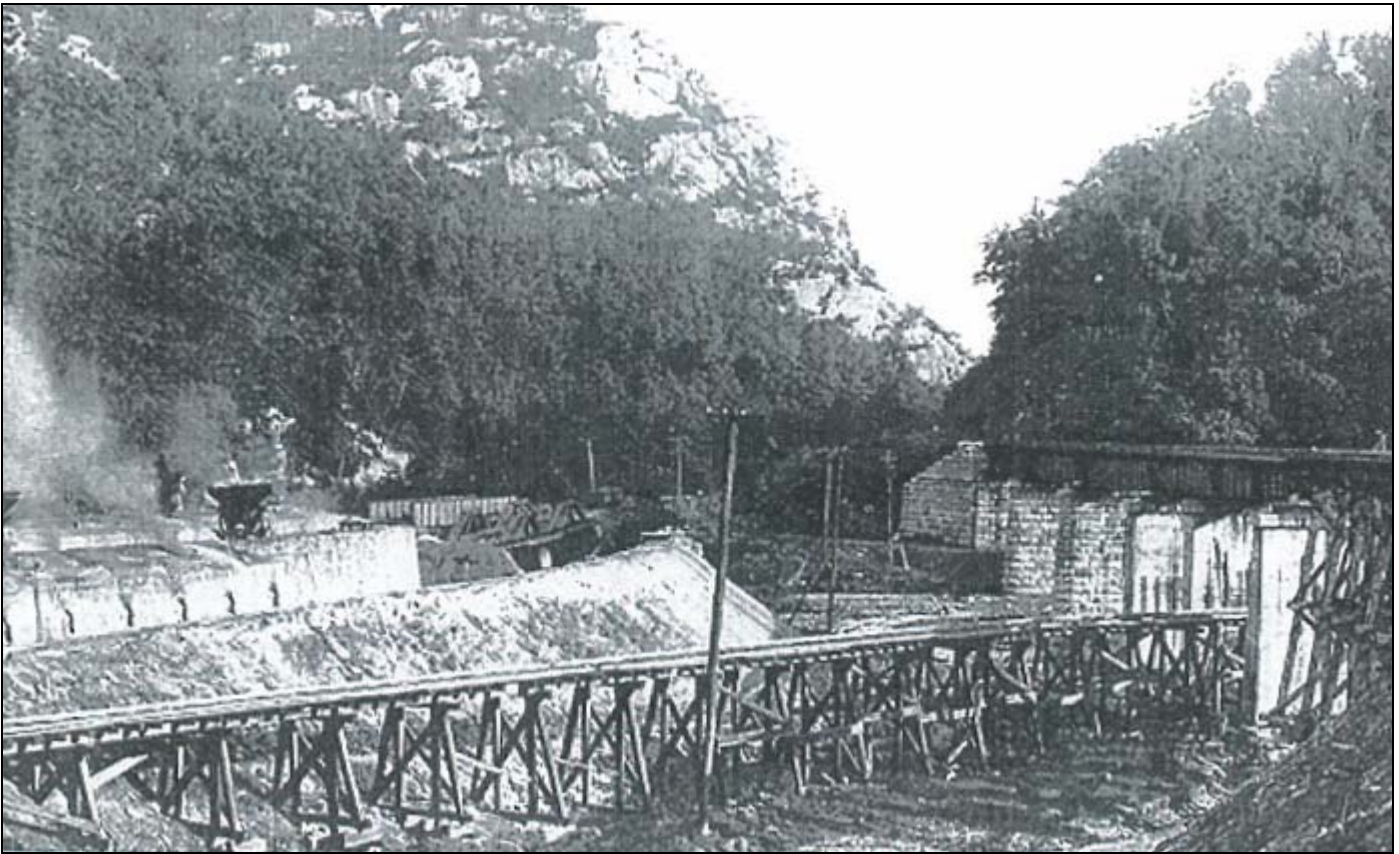


Figure 10: View of the east battery of coke ovens at LaFollette Coke Ovens and the LaFollette Company's rail line, below the L&N trestle, approximately 1910. A rail car is charging a coke oven on the left side.
(Source: John Van Huss, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell*; Campbell County Historical Society)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 36

LaFollette Coke Ovens

Name of Property

Campbell County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

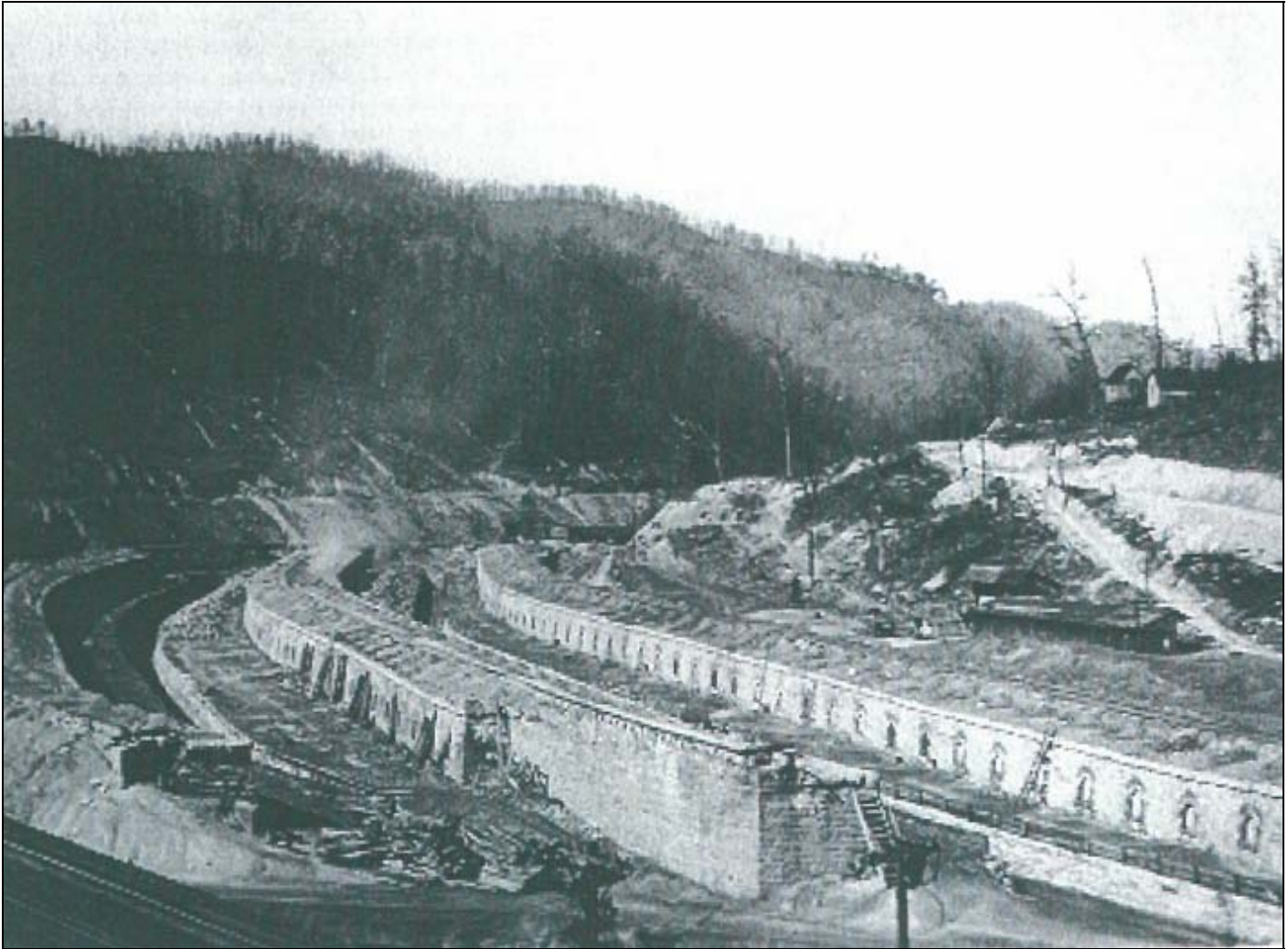


Figure 11: East battery of coke ovens at LaFollette Coke Ovens, depicting two dual batteries with a space for the sunken railroad tracks in between, approximately 1915.

(Source: John Van Huss, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell*; Campbell County Historical Society)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 37

LaFollette Coke Ovens

Name of Property

Campbell County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



Figure 12: View of the west battery of coke ovens at LaFollette Coke Ovens and the coal washer and washed-coal bunker. No date attributed to photograph.
(Source: John Van Huss, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell*; Campbell County Historical Society)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 38

LaFollette Coke Ovens

Name of Property

Campbell County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

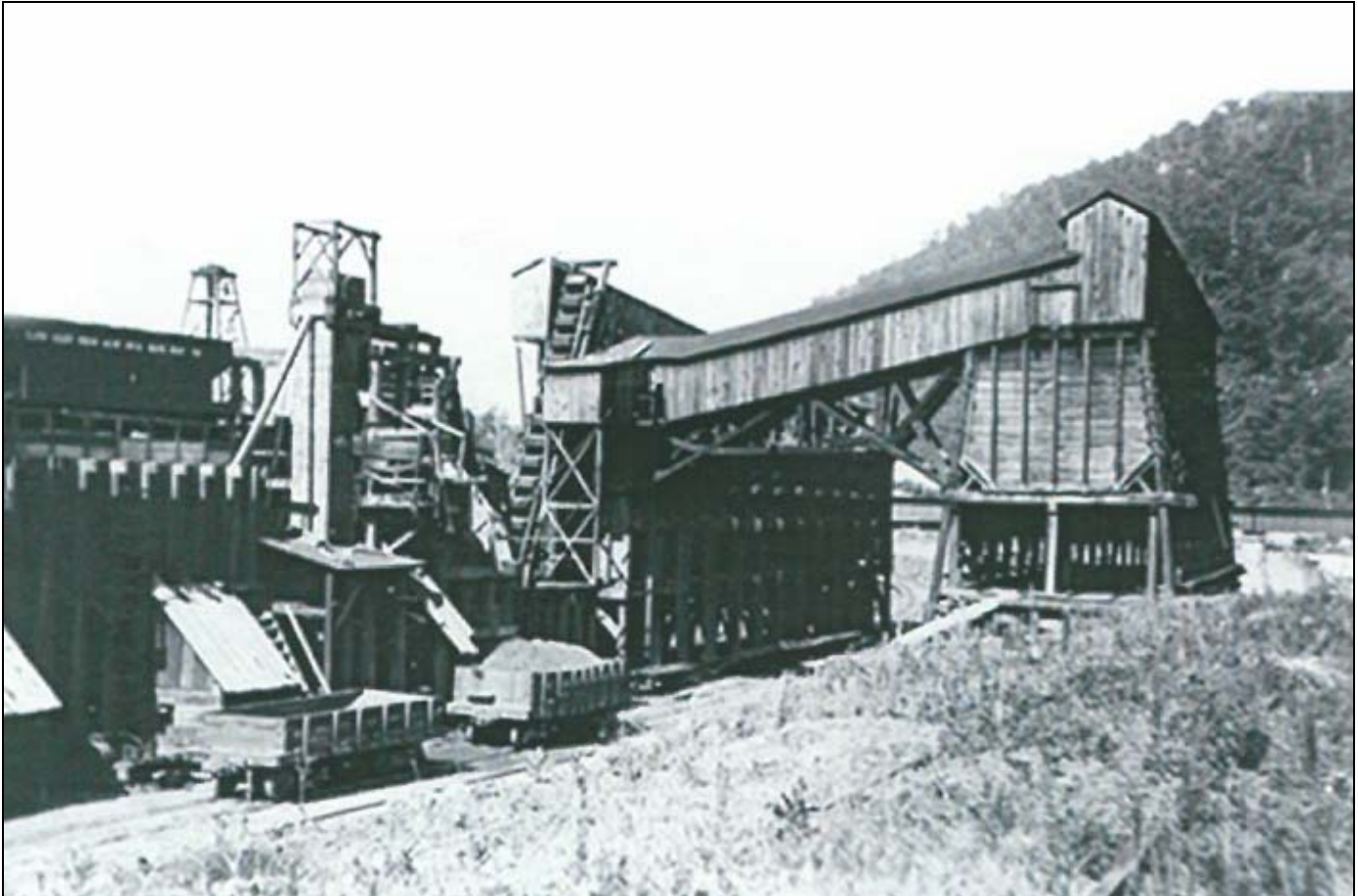


Figure 13: View of the coal washer and washed-coal bunker at LaFollette Coke Ovens. No date on photograph. Photograph taken from the top of the west battery of coke ovens.
(Source: John Van Huss, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell*; Campbell County Historical Society)

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National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 39

LaFollette Coke Ovens

Name of Property

Campbell County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

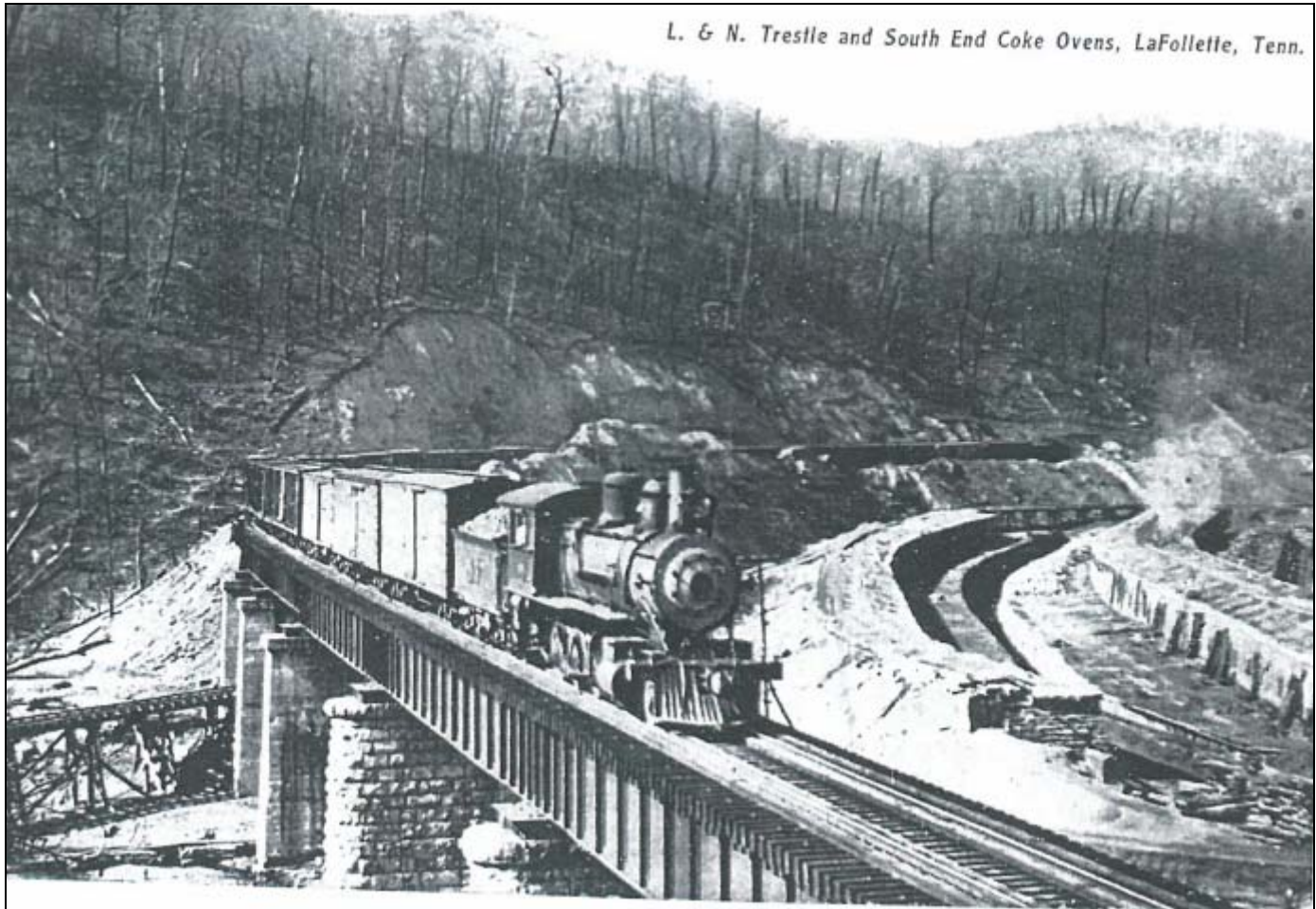


Figure 14: View of the east coke ovens at LaFollette Coke Ovens, located to the immediate right of the L&N rail line, approximately 1915.
(Source: John Van Huss, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell*; Campbell County Historical Society)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 40

LaFollette Coke Ovens

Name of Property

Campbell County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



Figure 15: View of Big Creek Gap and the dual bridges over Big Creek, approximately 1910.
(Source: John Van Huss, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell*; Campbell County Historical Society)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 41

LaFollette Coke Ovens

Name of Property

Campbell County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)



Figure 16: View of the dual bridges crossing Big Creek, approximately 1910.
(Source: John Van Huss, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell*; Campbell County Historical Society)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 42

LaFollette Coke Ovens

Name of Property

Campbell County, Tennessee

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

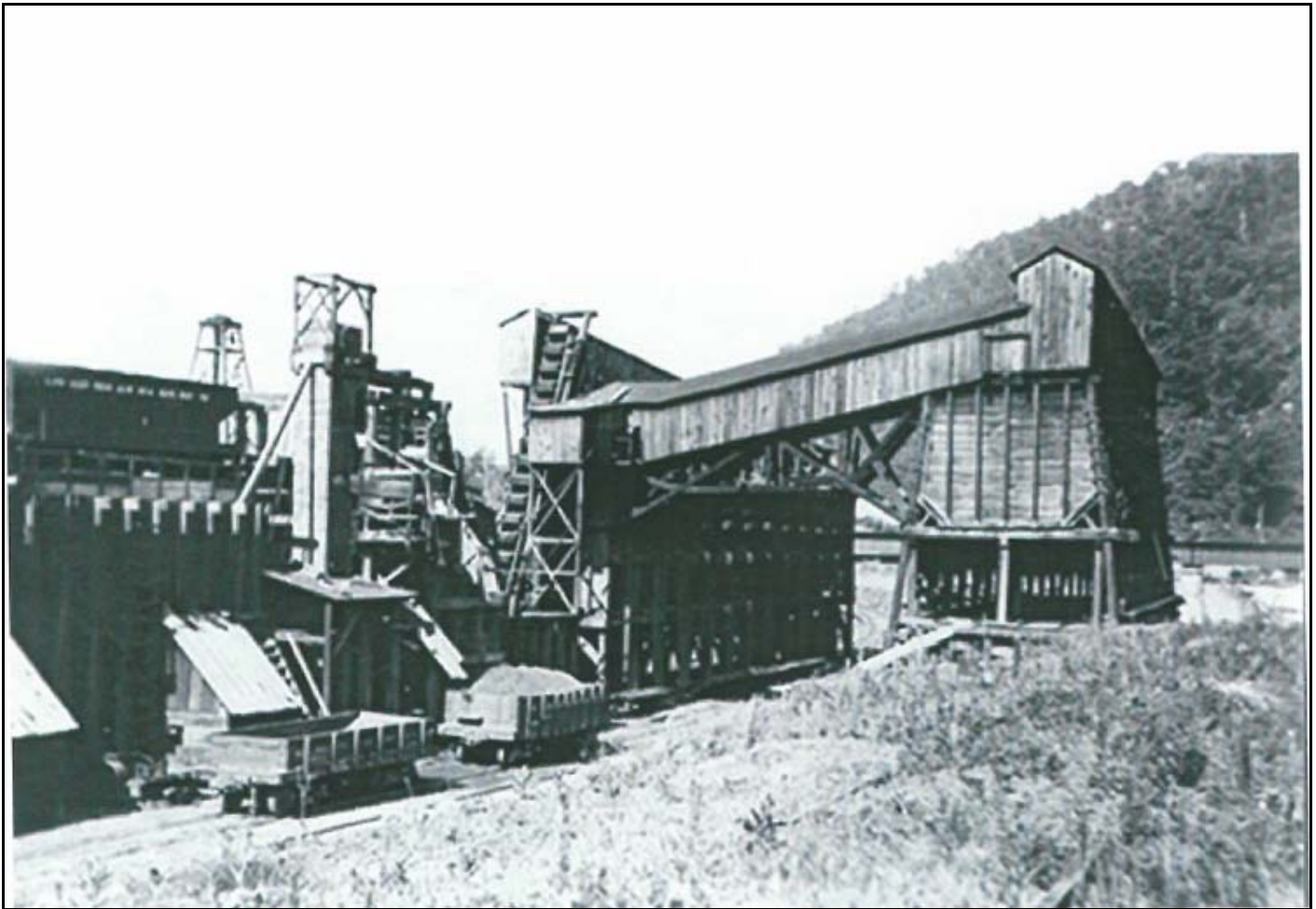


Figure 17: Image of the washed-coal bunker on the right, with the coal washer on the left (c.1910).
(Source: John Van Huss, *The Rise and Fall of Ivydell*; Campbell County Historical Society)

























































UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

REQUESTED ACTION: NOMINATION

PROPERTY NAME: LaFollette Coke Ovens

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: TENNESSEE, Campbell

DATE RECEIVED: 10/14/16 DATE OF PENDING LIST: 11/14/16
DATE OF 16TH DAY: 11/29/16 DATE OF 45TH DAY: 11/29/16
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 16000811

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 11-29-2016 DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

Rare surviving coke ovens, although deteriorated, reflect the importance of the coal industry to Region

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept/A

REVIEWER Jim Hubbard DISCIPLINE _____

TELEPHONE _____ DATE _____

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/ see attached SLR Y/

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



TENNESSEE HISTORICAL COMMISSION
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
2941 LEBANON PIKE
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-0442
OFFICE: (615) 532-1550
E-mail: Claudette.Stager@tn.gov
(615) 770-1089



October 6, 2016

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 *LaFollette Coke Ovens* to the National Register of Historic Places. The enclosed disks contain the true and correct copy of the nomination for the listing of the *LaFollette Coke Ovens* to the National Register of Historic Places.

If you have any questions or if more information is needed, contact Caroline Eller at 615/770-1086 or Caroline.Eller@tn.gov.

Sincerely,

Claudette Stager
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

CS:ce

Enclosures(3)