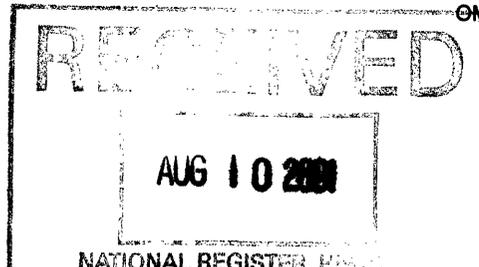


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National Register of Historic Places  
Multiple Property Documentation Form

*copy*



This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic ~~properties~~ <sup>properties</sup>. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

New Submission     Amended Submission

**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

Historic Resources of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds,  
1870-1950                      Athens, Hocking, and Perry Counties, Ohio

**B. Associated Historic Contexts**

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Transportation, Industrial, and Community Development in the  
Little Cities of Black Diamonds, 1870-1950  
Athens, Hocking, and Perry Counties, Ohio

**C. Form Prepared by**

name/title Jeffrey Darbee & Nancy Recchie, Historic Preservation Consultants  
organization Benjamin D. Rickey & Co.                      date June, 1999  
street & number 593 South Fifth Street                      telephone (614) 221-0358  
city or town Columbus                      state Ohio                      zip code 43206

**D. Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Barbara Pauer*                      Dept. Head  
Signature and title of certifying official                      Planning, Inventory & Registration

July 9, 2001  
Date

Ohio Historic Preservation Office -- OH SHPO  
State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

*Edson H. Beall*  
Signature of the Keeper

9/24/01  
Date of Action

Name of Multiple Property Listing

State Athens, Hocking  
& Perry Co. OH

**Table of Contents for Written Narrative**

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

See Continuation Sheet

**Page Numbers**

**E. Statement of Historic Contexts**

(If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)

**F. Associated Property Types**

(Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)

**G. Geographical Data**

**H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods**

(Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)

**I. Major Bibliographical References**

(List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

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**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. 470 et seq.).

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page   1  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

### Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Geographic and Temporal Definitions of the Context	3
Geographic Definition	3
Temporal Definition	4
Topography and Geology	5
The Pre-Boom Period, 1820-1870	6
The Hocking Valley Coalfield Before the Canal	6
The Canal Era	7
The Boom Period, 1870-1920	10
The Railroad Era	10
Establishment and Growth of Hocking Valley	
Coalfield Communities	18
Development of the Labor Movement	28
Development and Growth Patterns	32
The "Peak" Boom Years	36
The Bust Period, 1920-1950	37
The Hocking Valley Coalfield Today	39
Associated Property Types	41
Commercial	41
Company Towns	52
TownHalls/Fire Departments	54
Churches	55
Schools	57
Residential	59
Industrial/Mining/Rail Transportation-Related	65
Locally Produced Building Materials	67
Geographical Data	69
Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods	70
Bibliography	71
Photo Log	76

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   E   Page   2  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

This Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) concerns the Little Cities of Black Diamonds in Athens, Hocking and Perry counties in Ohio's Appalachian region. The name "Little Cities of Black Diamonds" reportedly originated at the turn-of-the-20<sup>th</sup>-century when a writer for an Athens newspaper wrote about Nelsonville and its rapid growth and prosperity as a result of the opening of the Hocking Valley Coalfield. The name was later expanded to the plural by Dr. Ivan Tribe (Rio Grande College, Rio Grande, Ohio) in his dissertation in 1976 and his later publication about the Little Cities of Black Diamonds. Now the term is widely used to refer to the approximately 50 small communities in 11 townships that were the heart of southeastern Ohio's Hocking Valley Coalfield, the state's primary coal mining region in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. These communities were once busy and vital places. Stitched together by a network of railroads that made coal mining economically feasible, they were the centers of life for thousands of miners, their families, merchants, craftsmen, laborers, and many others. With colorful and evocative names such as Congo, Buchtel, Moxahala, Shawnee and Trimble, many of these places grew rapidly and with a "boom town" vitality as the region's mineral resources were extracted and carried away.

Clay products, iron ore, salt, gals and oil production were components of the regional economy, but coal was king. **The boom years were between about 1870 and 1920, with a gradual decline from 1920 to 1950. The context goes back to 1820 in order to set the stage for the story of the boom period, but it is included here solely as background.**

The MPD covers the eight-decade boom and decline period between 1870 and 1950. Over the decades since the boom peaked, the little cities of southern Perry, and northern Hocking and Athens counties have seen their mineral-based economies slip away. Some communities have disappeared entirely – San Toy is perhaps one of the best known – while others are mere shadows of their former selves – Rendville, Congo, and Drakes, for example. Some, such as Shawnee and Glouster, survive in remarkably intact form, while others such as corning have lost some of their physical links with the past.

Yet all these communities retain a sense of pride, identity, and place that is impossible to extinguish. The Little Cities of Black Diamonds live and thrive in many ways – through song and story; in collections of old photographs; in the work of artists and the products of craftsmen; in the surviving buildings and structures that make up the fabric of the communities; and in the memories and recollections of people who lived in the boom times or learned from those who did.

An annual "Little Cities of Black Diamonds Day" is held in October and the most recent celebration attracted over 400 people in a celebration of the region's history, culture, and its future.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page   3  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

### Geographic and Temporal Definitions of the Context

#### Geographic Definition

The Little Cities of Black Diamonds region extends about 15 miles from east to west and about 15 miles from north to south. It covers portions of three Ohio counties: northern Athens and Hocking counties, and southern Perry County (see Map 1). The region includes 11 townships in these counties: Trimble, Dover, Athens and York townships in Athens County; Falls Gore, Green, and Ward townships in Hocking County; and Coal, Monday Creek, Monroe, Pleasant, and Salt Lick townships in Perry County. From the village of Haydenville, on the southwestern edge of the region, to the site of the vanished village of San Toy on the northeast, the air line distance is about 20 miles.

Contained within this area is the heart of what became known as the Hocking Valley Coalfield. Here at one time there were as many as 50 communities of varying size, nearly all of which were tied to the coal industry and, secondarily, to other extractive industries such as clay or oil and gas. Some, like Nelsonville, were substantial small cities and remain so today. Others were villages, centers of commerce and home to miners and others working in the region. Many of these survive today, including Corning, Glouster, New Straitsville, and Shawnee. Still others were smaller yet, often little more than coal camps that died out when the coal was exhausted. A few structures survive in some of these communities, such as Rendville, Buckingham, and Drakes, but others have vanished entirely.

Finally, a few communities were classic "company towns," according to a definition created by Mary Anne Reeves and David Mould in Dividing Lines, a book about transportation in the Hocking Valley. The book described a "company town" as a community usually constructed by an industry, often in remote areas. Company towns provided workers with residences that were inexpensive to rent from the company and were close to work, a store (usually owned by the company), and sometimes a social hall, school and/or church. These towns tended to be constructed in a compact manner, often linear in form, with the houses close together. These communities were entirely dependent on the company's activity and when that activity stopped, the entire community base was removed. San Toy (Perry County), one of the best known, has disappeared, while Hocking and Haydenville (both in Athens County) survive and are still recognizable as company towns. Congo (Perry County) also survives but its physical form is less recognizable as a former company town.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   E   Page   4  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

The following are surviving communities that today constitute the primary physical record of the region's rich history. In Athens County: Buchtel, Chauncey, Glouster, Hocking, Jacksonville, Millfield, Nelsonville, and Trimble; in Hocking County: Haydenville and Murray City (partly in Athens County); and in Perry County: Buckingham, Congo, Coming, Drakes, Hemlock, Moxahala, New Straitsville, Rendville, and Shawnee. These communities are the keepers of the story, the loci of the surviving physical fabric of the coal-based boom times of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in which the Little Cities region reached its greatest importance.

**Temporal Definition**

The context can be divided into three time periods:

- 1. The Pre-Boom Period, before 1870:** In this period, the region moved from pioneer settlements, small agrarian communities, and primarily local production and consumption of mineral resources, to the beginnings of large-scale exploitation of its abundant mineral wealth. Adequate transportation was the key to unlocking this wealth, and even modest success in doing so had to wait until the Hocking Canal was completed between Columbus and Athens in 1843. Though limited in capacity and able to operate only part of the year, the canal proved the marketability of the region's mineral products.
- 2. The Boom Period, 1870-1920:** This was the period in which mineral extraction and economic activity in the region were at their highest levels. Most of the Little Cities were established and grew to their maximum size, both in population and physically, in this period. The extension of railroad lines into the region made the Boom Period possible. Their speed, flexibility, year-round capability, and their ability to go where the coal was made them the ideal mode for bulk transportation of basic mineral commodities. Over about a 20-year period between 1870 and 1890, extension of trunk and secondary lines and construction of numerous branches permitted the opening of coal mines throughout the region and led directly to the establishment of most of the Little Cities.
- 3. The Post-Boom period, 1920-1970:** The end of the Boom Period resulted from a complex interplay of forces that included economic recession after World War I; the Great Depression; resource depletion; changes in transportation technology from a rail to a highway focus; and changes in mining technology, primarily the rise of surface mining and the decline of the more labor-intensive underground mining. All these combined over time to cause a sharp reduction in production of coal and other minerals and in the number of people employed in that production. More than anything else, the loss of jobs in the mineral industry completely and permanently changed the economies -- and the prospects -- of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page   5  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

### Topography and Geology

#### Topography

The Little Cities are located in the southeastern portion of Ohio, in the physiographic section known as the Unglaciaded Plateau. The glacial boundary -- consisting of the undifferentiated deposits of the Illinoian glacier -- runs diagonally across the middle of Perry County from southwest to northeast (see Map 2). The land south and east of the boundary -- including all of the land where the Little Cities lie -- never was covered by glacial ice. In the pre-glacial period, the streams draining the Little Cities area flowed south into the Albany River, which in turn was tributary to the westward-flowing Marietta River. This river was a major tributary of the mighty Teays River, which flowed out of West Virginia, north and west across Ohio and into Indiana. Following the glacial advances and retreats, the primary direction of drainage in southern Ohio had been reversed, with all the area's watersheds now draining south and east into the westward-flowing Ohio River.

While the Little Cities region can rightly be regarded as hilly and rugged, especially when compared with the much flatter terrain typical of the glaciated northwestern portion of the state, the actual changes in elevation are not very great. The Hocking River forms the southwestern boundary of the Little Cities region and flows southeast to the Ohio from headwaters near Lancaster. The Hocking descends from an elevation of about 680 feet above sea level at Nelsonville to about 655 feet at Chauncey (pronounced "Chancy") just north of Athens. North and east of the Hocking, the Little Cities lie within the watersheds of two streams -- Sunday and Monday creeks, said to have been named for the days on which white settlers discovered them. Their watersheds generally rise to a maximum elevation of just over 1,000 feet, making the greatest difference in elevation between the hilltops and the Hocking River just a little over 300 feet. The ruggedness of the terrain can be attributed to the small areas drained by the two creeks and the resultant steep fall from their headwaters to their junctions with the Hocking River. Erosion by Sunday and Monday creeks and their dozen or so tributary runs resulted in a topography of steep-sided valleys with few meanders and loops. This created narrow valley floors and little fertile bottom land conducive to agriculture.

#### Geology

The bedrock underlying the Little Cities of Black Diamonds is from the Pennsylvanian system and consists primarily of shale, sandstone, and limestone. These rocks formed from sediments laid down in warm, shallow seas. The western half of the Little Cities region is underlaid by the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 6

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

Pottsville and Allegheny formation, while rock in the eastern half is from the younger Conemaugh formation, at the higher elevations, and the Pottsville and Allegheny formation at lower elevations and in creek and river valleys; the thickness of these two formations of Pennsylvanian rock is about 800 feet. In the dozens of strata of which these rocks are composed are layers of shale, clay, sandstone, conglomerate, and limestone, interspersed with layers of iron ore and coal. Geologists identified twelve coal veins, of varying thickness and quality, in the Conemaugh formation rocks, and 25 veins in the older Pottsville and Allegheny rocks. The general dip of strata was to the east, which sent the coal measures deeper underground as one moved from west to east in the region.

As the downward-cutting runs and creeks made their way through the various rock strata, they exposed the edges of the strata and of the various coal and other mineral veins. By the time of white settlement about the turn of the 19th century, outcrops of coal were easily visible and readily mined without the need for extensive underground tunnels. Settlers found coal veins with thicknesses varying from as little as an inch in the Upper Little Pittsburgh vein to four feet and more in the Middle Kitanning No. 6 vein, which would come to be known as the "Great Vein" (see Map 3). In some places this vein approached 11 feet in thickness. Once tapped, the vast mineral wealth flowed out of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds -- and Ohio's other coal regions -- in a seemingly endless black river.

Over the nearly 175 years from 1820 to the early 1990s, coal production in Athens, Hocking, and Perry counties totaled over 500 million tons. For comparison, Ohio's 32 coal-producing counties in the same period produced some 3.4 billion tons; thus the three counties in which the Hocking Valley Coalfield was located produced about 15% of the state's total, with that production concentrated in the Little Cities region.

### **The Pre-Boom Period, 1820-1870**

#### **The Hocking Valley Coalfield Before the Canal**

Because the valley of the Hocking River and its tributaries, in what would become the Little Cities region, had relatively little prime land suitable for agriculture, settlement of the region came slowly. By 1830, when Ohio's population was over 930,000, Hocking County had only 4,000 citizens and Athens County 9,800. Even though southeastern Ohio was among the earliest-settled parts of the state, most people moved through without stopping, in search of better farmland to the north and west.

Even the county seats and major communities, though settled early, remained small in 1830.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page   7  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

Somerset, settled in 1828 as the original seat of Perry County, had just a few hundred inhabitants, while Logan, founded in 1816 and the seat of Hocking County, had 322. Athens had 728 people and was the oldest and largest of the region's communities. Nelsonville, located in northern Athens County along the Hocking River, was destined to become the heart of the Hocking Valley Coalfield. Settled in 1818, it too remained a small community -- it had only 73 residents in 1830.

Early settlers in the Hocking Valley quickly discovered the area's mineral resources, with mention of both coal and salt appearing on Manasseh Cutler's 1787 map of the Ohio Company's landholdings. Coal seams were readily visible in the hillsides bordering the valley; coal production was first reported in 1816 for Perry County, in 1820 for Athens County, and in 1840 for Hocking County. At the same time, salt was also discovered, primarily in the form of salt springs and brine wells. Salt production became dependent upon the local coal industry, since coal was the preferred fuel for boiling away the water to obtain the salt. Salt production was an important early industry in Athens County and it was shipped to the Ohio River via the Hocking River.

Lack of transportation in the Hocking Valley, other than the Hocking River, meant that coal and salt production and consumption would remain largely localized. Although the Hocking River was navigable, it was difficult to transport quantities large enough to put these industries on a paying basis, and distances to markets such as Lancaster and Columbus were too great to cover efficiently by wagon on the few existing roads. Production figures from the period illustrate how lack of efficient transportation options held back full exploitation of mineral resources. In Athens County, for example, cumulative coal production between 1820 and 1840 was just over 29,000 tons, with annual production ranging from about 200 tons in earlier years and just over 3,000 tons in later years. Perry County produced 34,000 tons between 1816 and 1840, with annual figures ranging from 100 to 2,000 tons. Hocking County produced 673 tons of coal in 1840, its first year of reported production. Salt production, too, was at a small scale, with fewer than 4,000 barrels produced yearly in the region in the late 1830s. It was clear to the valley's residents and promoters that the great promise of the area's mineral wealth would remain unrealized without better access to markets.

### **The Canal Era**

The first coal production in the Hocking Valley around 1820 coincided with the national fervor for "internal improvements." People in many of the states sought a way to end reliance on natural waterways such as rivers, the ocean, and the Great lakes and to open up potentially rich hinterlands to economic development. In some cases, the sought-after improvements consisted of turnpikes and public roads -- especially in the northeastern states -- but more often the term "internal improvements" was synonymous with canals. Some canals in New England dated to the late 18th

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section  E  Page  8

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

century, but the country's real canal boom began with the opening of the Erie Canal across New York state in 1825.

As a state with a growing population and an economy and a resource base with much promise, Ohio joined in the internal improvements movement. To a greater extent than most other states, this took the form of canals. From an auspicious start in 1825, on the same day the Erie Canal was dedicated, over about a quarter-century Ohio built some 1,000 miles of canals. These waterways were a critical factor in Ohio's subsequent rapid development and started the state on its way to the top rank of industrial states.

The core of the Ohio canal system consisted of two state-built canals that connected Lake Erie with the Ohio River. To the west, the Miami & Erie Canal was constructed between the late 1820s and 1845 and connected Toledo and Cincinnati by way of Defiance, Piqua, and Dayton. To the east, the Ohio & Erie Canal was constructed between 1825 and 1833; at just over 300 miles in length, it was a good deal longer than the Miami & Erie. The Ohio & Erie connected Cleveland with Portsmouth by way of Akron, Newark, and Circleville. Skirting the edge of the Unglaciaded Plateau, this canal ran south, southwest, then south again and had two major summits at Akron and near Newark.

In the Hocking Valley, agitation for a branch canal serving the valley from a connection with the Ohio & Erie canal came primarily from Nelsonville. James Knight, a storekeeper from that city, was a prime mover, in 1830 having taken a two-wagonload shipment of coal to Columbus to prove the coal's marketability. He correctly perceived that there would be a large market for Hocking Valley coal outside the valley itself but that the market would never develop without efficient transportation. Knight's efforts to promote a canal focused not only on the region's coal, but also on other minerals such as iron ore, salt, and clay.

The Ohio & Erie opened to traffic for its full length of 308 miles in 1833, but even during its construction the state had chartered several private canal companies to build branches that would serve communities not on the main canal. One such enterprise was the Lancaster Lateral Canal Company. In 1834, nine miles of canal built by this firm opened between Lancaster, located in Fairfield County at the upper end of the Hocking Valley, and Carroll, a small Fairfield County community located on the main line of the Ohio & Erie Canal.

In response to agitation from citizens and business interests in the lower Hocking Valley, the state had an engineer evaluate the proposed route through the valley and the mineral resources the canal would help to unlock. Favorably impressed by local stories and his own research, especially regarding the quantity of mineable coal in the Sunday Creek area, in early 1836 the engineer

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page   9  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

recommended the canal. The timing was fortuitous, coming at a point when the federal government had allocated surplus funds to the states for their use but before the Panic of 1837 choked off funding for internal improvements. The state contracted for construction of the first part of the canal's extension to Athens in mid-1836; its 56 miles and 26 locks were completed in 1843 (see Map 4).

The Hocking Canal's impact upon mineral production in the valley was immediate. Within a few years, salt production doubled, and within a decade it nearly doubled again. Coal production grew at an even faster rate. In Athens County, production went from 1,200 tons in 1841 to 36,000 in 1844. Only about a sixth of the 1844 production was carried on the canal, but production and shipping figures indicate that there may have been a good deal of stockpiling, since in some years the amount shipped far exceeded that produced. In addition, no doubt some production was locally consumed or left the area by other means. This makes it difficult to determine exactly how much of each year's production was shipped by canal, but the general trend is obvious: in 1844 the canal carried a quantity of coal that was five times the county's entire production in 1841. In the 1850s, the canal's annual coal tonnage ran between 20,000 and 60,000, with production figures in the range of 10,000 to 80,000 tons.

The story in Hocking County was similar. From 1,300 tons in 1841, production rose to 3,300 in 1845 and to 10,300 in 1850. Through the 1850s, the county's coal production ran between 10,000 and 45,000 tons. Perry County, not located on the Hocking Canal, saw its coal production rise more slowly. It held at 1,400 to 1,600 tons annually through the 1840s and between 9,300 and 44,000 through the 1850s. It is likely that the rapid growth of mining in the adjacent counties of Hocking and Athens stimulated southern Perry County's production and that roads were improved enough to make it feasible to ship Perry County coal by land to a loading point on the canal.

In the decade of the 1860s, coal production in all three counties continued to rise. Athens County produced 56,000 to 150,000 tons annually; Hocking County 20,000 to 72,000; and Perry County 47,000 to 74,000. As in the previous decade, much of this production was shipped on the Hocking Canal.

By 1870, the eve of the arrival of the railroads, the Hocking Canal had played a material role in establishing coal mining as the primary industry of this portion of the Hocking River valley -- the area below Logan and above Athens, principally in the valley itself and north of the river along Sunday and Monday creeks. Salt production continued at varying levels, in the range of 20,000 to 25,000 barrels a year during the 1850s and 1860s, and there was some exploitation of clay deposits. However, coal, and the ability finally to get it to market efficiently, was the primary stimulus for

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section  E  Page  10

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

population growth and economic development in what would become the Little Cities of Black Diamonds.

Population figures help illustrate the region's growth and coal's influence on that growth. By 1870 there still were only a few organized communities; most of the Little Cities were founded after arrival of the railroads. For communities existing at the time, absolute population numbers were fairly small, but the rates of growth were impressive. Nelsonville, for example, had a population of 207 in 1840; by 1870 the total was nearly 1,100, nearly a five-fold increase in 30 years. Haydenville, located in the river valley north of Nelsonville, was a company-owned town from its start in 1852. By 1870 it had grown from just a few inhabitants to several hundred. By contrast, communities such as Chauncey and Salina, which were centers of the salt industry, grew little if at all. Chauncey remained at about 200 inhabitants from the late 1840s into the 1870s, although it would grow considerably when coal mines were opened near it about the turn of the century. Salina had a population of 88 in 1860 but never reached more than 200 in later years, even though some coal mining in the vicinity helped boost the population. Clearly, it was the coal mining towns that had the brighter future.

### **The Boom Period, 1870-1920**

#### **The Railroad Era**

The arrival of the railroads made all the difference in the Hocking Valley Coalfield. Their ability to overcome grades, reach back into remote hollows, and run year-round -- in addition to their greater speed and higher carrying capacity -- made it clear that the Hocking Canal's days were over. The canal hung on until the mid-1890s, but after 1870 the railroad would be the region's primary transport mode for a period of about 75 years. The five-decade-long boom period could not have occurred without rail transportation.

The Hocking Valley Coalfield would eventually be served by a network of rail lines that were part of three of the great eastern rail systems of the first half of the 20th century -- the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B&O), the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway (C&O), and the New York Central System (NYC). Coalfield rail lines consisted of main lines, branch lines, and mining spurs that blanketed the Little Cities region, providing a complete transportation system for people, goods, and coal and making the mining of Hocking Valley coal an economically feasible activity. The rail network of the Little Cities region was put in place between the late 1860s and about 1900, and it remained largely intact until the 1950s (see Map 5).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   E   Page   11  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

The upper and lower ends of the Hocking River valley had rail service as early as the mid-1850s. At the upper end, Lancaster was on the route of the Cincinnati, Wilmington & Zanesville Railroad, a cross-state line, completed in 1855, that connected Zanesville with Cincinnati by means of a connection with the Little Miami Railroad at Morrow, northeast of Cincinnati. Later known as the Cincinnati & Muskingum Valley, the line became part of the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) system. Passing some 10 miles north of the "Great Vein" of coal in southern Perry County and lacking any branch lines, neither this line nor the PRR itself became important in the Hocking Valley Coalfield.

Similarly, the Marietta & Cincinnati Railroad crossed the Hocking River at Athens in the lower valley. This line, which would become an important part of the B&O's route between Washington, D.C. and St. Louis, was completed in 1857. It had one branch dating from the late 1860s that served mines at Carbondale, west of Athens. However, like the PRR route through Lancaster, the Marietta & Cincinnati never was more than a minor coal carrier in the area and was of little consequence in the development of the Little Cities Region.

In order to open up the Hocking Valley Coalfield to significant coal production, rail lines would have to serve the valley itself as well as the valleys of the river's two primary coal region tributaries, Sunday and Monday creeks. This is in fact what occurred; from the late 1860s on, the Hocking valley and those two creek valleys and their tributary runs were penetrated by a web of rails such that by the turn of the century there was not a single community more than a mile or two from a rail line.

The Monday Creek valley, the more western of the two, was "opened up" by predecessor railroads of the C&O, and eventually all of them became C&O properties. First of all the lines serving the region was the Columbus & Hocking Valley Railroad. It was to be known in later years by other corporate names, but even after merger with the C&O it was always known as the Hocking Valley, and surviving portions of it remain known as that today. (It has been memorialized by the Hocking Valley Scenic Railway, which runs on the original alignment between Nelsonville and Logan for seasonal excursion service.) According to the National Register nomination for the Hocking Valley Railway Historic District (NRHP, 1988) "the Hocking Valley railway was unique in that it was the only railroad line to be built in the Hocking Valley, a natural transportation corridor along which the river (both prehistoric and historic), canal (ca. mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century), railway (1869-70), and highway transportation have superseded each other."

Interest in a rail line paralleling the canal through the Hocking River valley dated to the early 1850s, but political maneuvering by rival roads, together with the interruption of the Civil War, pushed any real action on the line into the second half of the 1860s. Proposed at first

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   E   Page  12 

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

as the Mineral Railroad, the line was promoted by southeastern Ohio landowners and investors. The railroad was planned to run between Columbus and Athens, its purpose being to open the valley's mineral wealth to development by rail connection to Columbus and markets beyond. By this period, near the end of the Civil War, Ohio's capital city had been securely tied into the nation's trunk-line railroad system, with lines in operation to Cincinnati/St. Louis, Indianapolis/St. Louis/Chicago, Cleveland/Buffalo/New York, and Wheeling/ Baltimore/Washington. Connection to Pittsburgh and New York, through Pennsylvania, was only a few years away. Thus the promoters of the Mineral Railroad knew they could serve unlimited markets for the products of the Hocking Valley if they could only link it with Columbus. Together with Columbus interests such as Peter Hayden (founder of Haydenville, located on the canal and on the proposed rail route), Allen Thurman (a future governor), and John Gill; many of these men owned coal lands in the valley and were anxious to see the canal supplanted by rail service. Columbus investors provided the bulk of the line's capital, with Lancaster, Logan, and Athens providing most of the rest, and construction began in mid-1867, the road having in the meantime been re-named the Columbus & Hocking Valley Railroad Company (C&HV), regionally known as the "Hocking Valley." Progress was slow but steady, and as the line worked its way down the valley from Columbus, freight and passenger service was begun from various points on the completed line. The track reached Logan, where the car and locomotive shops would be established, in the spring of 1869, and Nelsonville in July. The first carloads of Hocking Valley Coalfield coal left the latter point for Columbus on August 17, 1869, to much fanfare up and down the line. Between then and the end of the year, the railroad carried over 53,000 tons northward, some 74% of Hocking County's total production of 72,000 tons for the year. The C&HV's arrival in Athens in July of 1870 completed the long-sought transportation route, providing connections not only to Columbus and beyond but also to Cincinnati and to the east via the M&C line through Athens. As the tonnage figures above indicated, Nelsonville soon became the focal point of coal shipping on the Hocking Valley railroad route, with the line's major coal marshalling yard located there.

Completion of the main line of the C&HV did not stimulate creation of new communities; it served already-established ones such as Nelsonville and Haydenville, though these places certainly underwent immediate and rapid growth because of the railroad. It was up Monday Creek, which entered the Hocking River a little below Nelsonville, and its tributaries, that yet more untapped coal deposits awaited development, and it was here, "back in the hills," that the railroad would provide the impetus for town-building. Within a few years after completion of the C&HV main line, the railroad and other interests built a web of branch lines and coal spurs, further opening up the region's coal resources (all these lines would be absorbed by the C&HV and its successors, eventually becoming part of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   E   Page  13 

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

Mining interests knew of the "Great Vein" located in the hills of southern Perry County north of Nelsonville and near the hamlet of Straitsville. A group of Perry County investors in early 1867 had proposed a rail line from the north, the Newark, Somerset & Straitsville (NS&S). They moved so slowly, however, that in 1868 a rival group in Logan pushed an alternate proposal, the Logan & Straitsville Railroad (L&S). This would be built northeastward from Logan, on the then-abuilding C&HV, to Straitsville and would be a major coal branch.

In anticipation of the branch line's arrival, land along the route started changing hands as speculators and developers saw opportunity. John D. Martin of Lancaster, a C&HV stockholder, organized the Straitsville Mining Company and in the spring of 1870 platted a new town on a farm in the valley a mile southeast of the hilltop village of Straitsville. Named New Straitsville, the newborn town would become the most important, in coal production, of all the Little Cities in the Monday Creek watershed. The C&HV absorbed the L&S at this time, and the branch, after its completion at the end of 1870, became a primary source of coal traffic for the railroad: in 1871, more than 80,000 were shipped from the town by rail.

South and east of New Straitsville, other runs and forks tributary to Monday Creek represented further opportunity to develop coal deposits and grow new towns. The rail lines that would accomplish this were built by the C&HV rather than independent investors, though many investors and coal operators bought up land along Monday Creek and Snow Fork, a principal tributary, in anticipation of the railroad's action. The road's directors acted in January of 1873 to build the Monday Creek and Snow Fork branches, conducting surveys and purchasing rights-of-way. The Monday Creek branch would diverge from the C&HV main line at the south (railroad east) end of the Nelsonville yard and then parallel the C&HV's Athens line for more than two miles before turning sharply northward in a horseshoe curve to run up Monday Creek. About two miles up the creek, Snow Fork Junction would be established, and from this point the Snow Fork branch would run east and north, branching once again to run up both Snow Fork and Brush Fork. The Monday Creek branch, meanwhile, would continue north and west up the creek, eventually joining the former L&S line at Monday Creek Junction about two miles west of New Straitsville.

The Panic of 1873 put a stop to any actual construction of the proposed branches for several years. When conditions improved, around 1877, the stimulus to begin construction came from iron rather than coal, at least at first. Numerous iron operators, both novice and experienced, established blast furnaces in the Monday Creek valley and in some of its tributary valleys. Though the iron boom was not to last, petering out by the mid-1880s, it was enough to get the C&HV to work on the proposed branch lines. By the end of 1877 the Monday Creek Branch had been built about halfway to Monday Creek Junction, while the Snow Fork Branch had reached Orbiston, just south of Brush

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page  14 

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

Fork Junction. Completion of both branches came more slowly, the final rails being laid about 1882 or 1883.

By this time, the basic rail network of the western portion of the Little Cities region was in place: the C&HV main line between Columbus and Athens; the Straitsville Branch between Logan and New Straitsville; the Monday Creek Branch from Nelsonville to Monday Creek Junction near New Straitsville; the Snow Fork Branch from Snow Fork Junction to Murray City; and the Brush Fork Branch from Brush Fork Junction (on the Snow Fork Branch) to New Pittsburgh. Over the two decades from the early 1880s to the early 1900s, the network would be fleshed out further, with numerous mine spurs and two more named branches (the Lost Run and Sand Run branches, which joined the Monday Creek Branch north of Carbon Hill). By the turn of the 20th century and shortly afterward, the C&HV's mainline, branches, and spurs directly served a score of communities and more than 40 mines and tipples.

The C&HV was the Little Cities region's pioneer railroad, but others were not long in coming. The second line to enter the region was the Newark, Somerset & Straitsville (NS&S), the line organized by Perry County interests, which had been beaten by the Logan & Straitsville to the rich coal seams at what would become New Straitsville.

As was noted earlier, the NS&S would enter the region from directly to the north. The line had its genesis, as did many others, in newspaper promotion, in this case through the efforts of the Somerset Advocate, which was started for the purpose of ensuring construction of a railroad from Newark, in Licking County, to Straitsville via Somerset. The latter village was on Zane's Trace and had been the seat of Perry County until New Lexington won that honor after the CW&Z bypassed Somerset in favor of "New Lex" in the 1850s. Somerset interests hoped that routing the Straitsville line via Somerset would revive the village's prospects.

Newark, at the north end of the proposed line, was important to the NS&S for its railroad connections. By the early 1850s the city was served by the Central Ohio Railroad, which ran east from Columbus to a connection with the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) at Wheeling, (West) Virginia, on the Ohio River; the B&O, in turn, had just completed its main line Wheeling and Baltimore. In addition, the Sandusky, Mansfield & Newark Railroad ran north from Newark to the important Lake Erie port of Sandusky. Thus Newark provided direct rail connections to the east, north, and west for the coal traffic that would flow up the proposed NS&S.

The NS&S was incorporated in April of 1867. Stock sales went very slowly, and construction did not begin until the summer of 1869. An 1,100-foot tunnel at Bristol and a deep cut at Somerset (still visible today, though the track is long gone) made progress expensive and difficult, but in the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   E   Page  15 

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

spring of 1872 the NS&S was completed. Instead of its original goal of Straitsville, which the C&HV/Logan & Straitsville had already reached, the new line terminated at the newly-platted village of Shawnee City. Later (and still) known as Shawnee, this community was two miles northeast of Straitsville and New Straitsville and was destined to become one of the region's larger and livelier towns. It lay along Shawnee Creek, a tributary of the upper reaches of Monday Creek.



**The B&O Railroad Depot in Shawnee was a handsome board and batten structure with brackets and overhanging eaves, typical of designs found elsewhere on the B&O.**

Both the SM&N and the NS&S, like their connection at Newark, the Central Ohio, in the 1860s became part of the B&O. Though the only communities in the Little Cities region served by the line were Shawnee and the small village of McCuneville, a little to the north of Shawnee, the NS&S/B&O line was important and stimulated development both of area coal mines and of Shawnee itself. By the turn of the 20th century, the line served four coalmines in and near Shawnee and had a branch up a run southwest of the village. The B&O line's presence persisted surprisingly long; though the track had been gone nearly three decades, in 1999 a small building in Shawnee still bore a sign marked "Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Freight Office."

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page  16 

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

With the B&O and the C&O, or, more correctly, their predecessors, having sent tracks up all the important creeks and runs of the Monday Creek watershed, it fell to other railroads to open up the Sunday Creek area, which lay just east of Monday Creek. In time, all of these routes would become part of the New York Central Railroad, one of the nation's major eastern/midwestern systems.

Monday Creek drained large areas of Athens and Hocking counties, as well as a small portion of Perry County around Shawnee. Sunday Creek flowed southward into the Hocking River some six miles east of where Monday Creek entered the river and drained a large portion of southern Perry County and the northeastern portion of Athens County. Like that of Monday Creek, the Sunday Creek watershed at the end of the Civil War was rich with unexploited coal deposits that would blossom into great wealth once reliable transportation was available.

Extension of railroads into, and therefore development of, the Sunday Creek area came about a decade later than in the Monday Creek area. Though railroad promotion in the former area began about the same time as in the latter -- the late 1860s -- it would be the early 1880s before real progress would be made.

The earliest talk was of a short route that would branch from the CW&Z at New Lexington and head southeast down the Sunday Creek valley. Before long, this idea was expanded into a proposed Toledo-Ohio River route, the Atlantic & Lake Erie Railway (A&LE) that would traverse the Sunday Creek Valley on its way to Pomeroy, on the Ohio. There connection to the east would be made with a proposed line to Norfolk, Virginia by way of the Kanawha Valley of West Virginia.

The A&LE was incorporated in June of 1869, after which the effort to sell stock was undertaken with vigor. This met with all-too-common middling success, though even talk of a railroad induced investors and speculators to buy up land and mineral rights, and even to start some new towns, along the anticipated route. By June of 1870, enough stock had been sold to permit the start of construction, which occurred at New Lexington, where connection with the CW&Z was made. It was not long before the Panic of 1873 further burdened the A&LE, slowing progress even more. Work continued slowly, more successfully in some years than others, until the exhausted company entered receivership in July of 1877. At this point the road had graded 99 miles; had laid 27 miles of track which was not finished enough to permit operation; and had finished and was operating seven miles of track between New Lexington and the recently-established town of Moxahala.

In the midst of its struggles in the 1870s, the road had changed its name to Ohio Central.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   E   Page  17 

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

When it was purchased at auction in March of 1878, the new owners, which included both local people and some from Columbus, re-named the line the Columbus & Sunday Creek Valley Railroad. Construction once again got underway, including work on a 1/3-mile tunnel south of Moxahala and on the partially-finished line from New Lexington to Columbus and its excellent rail connections. In the Little Cities region, work was concentrated on the seven miles south from Moxahala to the newly-platted town of Corning. Once again named the Ohio Central, the line was completed in January of 1880 for the entire distance between Columbus and Corning. During 1880 and 1881, the line was extended further south to the main forks of Sunday Creek, the point where the town of Glouster would soon be settled. From this point the railroad built a branch to the north and west along the West Branch of Sunday Creek. This line ran only about a mile west of Corning but was separated from it by steep hills. At this point the branch turned west several miles to terminate at Buckingham, in Perry County a little east of Shawnee.

The OC main line eventually was extended north of Columbus to Toledo and south of Glouster to the mining regions east of Charleston, West Virginia. By late in the 19th century the line had been re-named again, this time as the Toledo & Ohio Central, and it became an integral part of the New York Central System. The Buckingham Branch would be the OC's only branch line in the Little Cities region, but the line built at least ten spurs in the stretch between Moxahala and Chauncey, a little north of Athens. At the turn of the 20th century, the OC served a total of 23 mines and tipples along its main line, branch, and spurs.

The Little Cities region would see the arrival of one more railroad before its transportation map was complete. This line came from the northeast and was known as the Columbus, Shawnee & Hocking Railroad. It originated at Zanesville in Muskingum County and ran west and south, entering the Little Cities region at Rendville, where it ran parallel to and east of the OC main line. Known later as the Zanesville & Western (Z&W) and eventually absorbed by the T&OC, this railroad crossed the OC at grade just north of downtown Corning. It then ran north again and then looped west and south, using natural hollows and a tunnel to get past the ridge separating Corning from the West Branch of Sunday Creek. The line served the new town of Congo, and at Drakes it came in from the north and linked up with the existing OC branch to Buckingham. The Z&W and OC shared the track from Drakes to Buckingham, and from there the Z&W extended west to Shawnee, where it terminated in a connection with the B&O branch from Newark. In addition, the Z&W had service from Drakes to Glouster, but instead of building its own track it shared the existing OC branch. Thus, for its entire length, the OC's Buckingham Branch was shared with the Z&W's trains from the time the Z&W opened for service in October of 1890. Though the track was shared, mine spurs were not, so the OC and the Z&W provided exclusive service to various mines and tipples along their lines. It was noted above that the OC served 23 such facilities around the turn of the 20th century; the shorter Z&W at this time served nine.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page  18 

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

Two other minor railroads should be mentioned in order to make the story complete. Between Chauncey and Athens, a short line called the Athens, Amesville & Chauncey (AA&C) connected with the C&HV, headed east across the parallel T&OC, and ran north and east to serve two Continental Coal Company mines. Little is known about this line. It did not appear on railroad maps as of 1900, but is shown as the AA&C by 1905. By 1916 the line was still active but not separately identified; possibly by then it had become part of the T&OC. In any case, it appears to have made a modest contribution to development of the region's coal resources.

The other railroad was a T&OC extension built southeast from Palos, which was located on the T&OC main line between Glouster and Corning. This line primarily served the Federal Creek Valley, which was beyond the boundaries of the Little Cities Region. By 1900 this line had made connection with the B&O near Marietta. It enjoyed a brief period of prosperity serving mines that produced coking coal, as well as several coke ovens, but most of the coking operations were gone before 1900, and most of the railroad was torn up by the end of World War I. Its contribution to the development of the Little Cities region was very small.

By the turn of the 20th century, then, a three-decade period of railroad building had brought rapid economic development to the Little Cities region, and had resulted in establishment and growth of the Little Cities themselves. Early industries such as salt production and iron-making, which relied on the Hocking Canal and some of the early railroads, had come and gone because outside economic forces made it impossible for them to survive. The future of the Hocking River, Sunday Creek, and Monday Creek valleys was in coal and, to a lesser extent, clay products. Those industries could not reach their potential until the rail network was in place. That requirement had been met by 1900, and the stage was now set for two more prosperous decades, the most prosperous the Little Cities would know for the entire 20th century.

### **Establishment and Growth of Hocking Valley Coalfield Communities**

As was noted in the discussion of the Railroad Era, nearly all of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds were established because of railroad construction. The typical pattern was that, once railroad "agitation" began for a particular route or area, land and mineral investors and speculators quickly bought up property along the proposed route. They sometimes had to wait longer than they would have liked, as the railroad companies struggled with slow stock sales, difficult and expensive construction, and the Panic of 1873. Eventually, however, all the proposed lines were constructed and most of the proposed towns were built.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

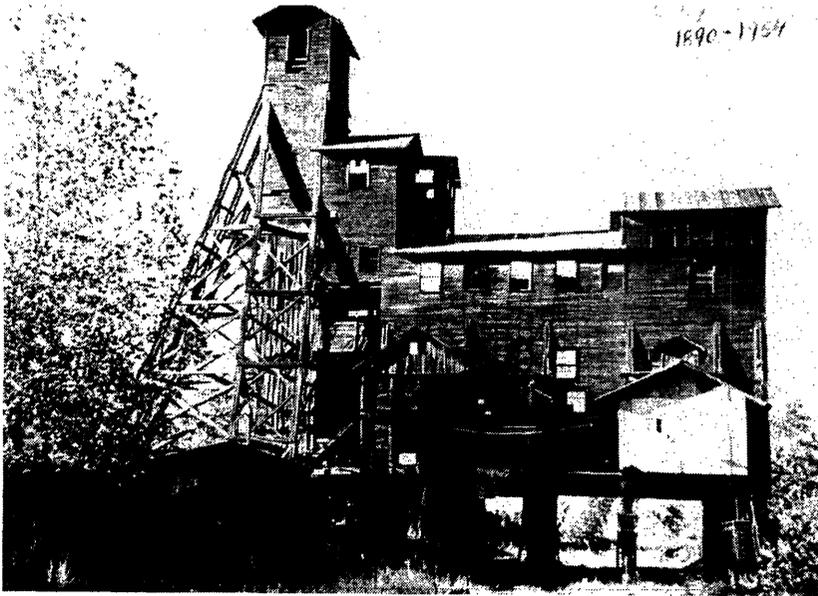
## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page   19  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

All of it rested on coal; without that mineral, the creeks and runs of the Little Cities region would have remained wild and undeveloped, and the railroads would not have been built. But the coal was there, and the railroads permitted its exploitation on a scale unimagined in canal days. The coal market was notoriously uneven, careening between boom and bust as various influences beyond the coal operators' control affected prices and, therefore, production levels. In the Little Cities region, however, the symbiotic relationship between the railroads and the coal industry could be seen simply by studying the reported coal production levels for the three counties of the Little Cities region.



**The Congo Mine (1890-1954) was typical of the coal mines that sprang up throughout the Little Cities of Black Diamonds region during the coal boom years.**

Hocking County, for example, leaped from production of 50,000 to 70,000 tons annually just before completion of the C&HV, to 300,000 to 560,000 tons within the first few years after the C&HV was completed. Through the late 1870s to the end of the 1880s, the county's annual coal production ranged between 200,000 and 900,000 tons, with 1888's figure reaching almost 1.1 million tons. From 1890 until the end of the boom in 1920-21, Hocking County's production never

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 20

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

fell below a million tons annually, with peak production of over 2.3 million tons in several years. From 1921 on, production did not exceed the range of 200,000 to 450,000 tons annually until after World War II.

Athens County showed similar trends in coal production. From annual tonnage of 100,000 to nearly 200,000 just before completion of the C&HV, the county jumped to 450,000 to over 600,000 tons in the mid- and late 1870s. The early to mid-1880s saw annual tonnages of 628,000 to over 900,000, and from 1887 on the figure never fell below about 1.1 million tons. As in Hocking County, there was a significant decline in production after 1920, but it was not as severe in Athens County. From the early 1920s until 1948, annual production stayed above 1 million tons, mostly in the 1.7 to 2.5 million ton range.

Perry County's coal production figures reflected the later arrival of the railroads. Much of Athens and Hocking county production was in the Monday Creek Valley, which had rail transportation as much as ten years sooner than the Sunday Creek Valley, where most of Perry County's production was located. Since Perry County was some distance from the Hocking Canal, its coal production rose only modestly once the canal was completed. From less than 2,000 tons annually in the 1840s, tonnage rose from 5,300 in 1849 to 77,000 in 1870. Completion of the Straitsville Branch and the NS&S to New Straitsville and Shawnee, respectively, caused a large jump in the early 1870s: from 80,500 tons in 1871 to 550,000 in 1872, and then between 500,000 and 700,000 tons annually through the 1870s. As the T&OC and other lines in the Sunday Creek watershed's eastern portion were completed in the 1880s, the county's annual coal production rose accordingly. Production in 1879 was 615,000 tons, while in 1880 it was 1.4 million. From 1880 to 1926, production stayed between 1.2 and 3.7 million tons a year. It fell to just over a half-million tons in 1927 and stayed below a million until World War II; from the end of the war until the 1990s, Perry County produced at least a million tons annually, with maximum production just below four million.

From the upper reaches of the Monday Creek watershed southward, the Little Cities of Black Diamonds include Shawnee (NR Historic District, 1976), New Straitsville, Murray City, Buchtel, Haydenville (NR Historic District, 1973), and Nelsonville (NR Historic District, 1996). Of these, the last two are the oldest. Nelsonville, located along the Hocking River, was founded in 1818. Though it grew slowly until completion of the canal, from then on, and especially after the C&HV and its main yard were completed in the late 1860s, Nelsonville was the principal community of the Little Cities region. Haydenville dated from 1852 and was true "company town" from the start. Peter Hayden of Columbus, an enterprising transplanted New Englander, purchased land along the Hocking Canal and opened a mine, about midway between Logan and Nelsonville. The mine and the town, obviously named for its founder, grew together, and Hayden later added clay products to

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page  21 

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

the community's employment base. The Haydenville Mining and Manufacturing Company became well known for its sewer pipe and similar products.

Although it didn't have the same economic impact as coal, the production of clay products was an increasingly important industry in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and it had a direct relationship with the production of coal. The Hocking Clay Manufacturing Company was established in 1883 in Haydenville, with Peter Hayden as its president.. Within four years, there were over 40 kilns operating in Haydenville and Logan and it was supplying building and paving products throughout the country. A c.1900 catalogue of the Hocking Clay and Manufacturing Company described the clay used in its production *"The Great Vein coal of the Hocking Valley is known and numbered in the Geology of the State as "No.6." The clays in this section are all, or nearly all, associated with the coals, the clay vein underlying the coal. . It is now a generally conceded fact that the fire clays of the Carboniferous age or formation are the best, for general purposes, of all the fire clays, and those of this section of Ohio have now come to be regarded as, for many uses, the most valuable in the State, if not, indeed, in the Union."* This clay contained large amounts of alkali and iron which contribute to the character of the finished product – especially the iron-spot brick used throughout the region as a paving material. In describing the firing process, the catalogue stated *"We use the famous Great Vein Hocking Valley Bituminous Coal, mined by the Company from its own lands."* The Hocking Clay catalogue also included a list of buildings constructed with their products including the U.S. Courthouse and Post Office Buildings in St. Joseph (MO), Rochester (NY), Erie (PA), Greenville (SC) and Wilmington (NC); the Art Institute, Congress Hotel and the Illinois Central Railroad Depot in Chicago; the State Street Exchange in Boston; and the City Hall in Cincinnati.

The growth of the clay products industry also coincided with the period when many towns and cities were paving streets and sidewalks with brick. Demand for paving brick and other clay products stimulated the formation of additional clay manufacturing industries in Shawnee (Claycraft, Ironclay, and the Shawnee Flash Brick companies), New Straitsville (Straitsville Impervious Brick Company), Nelsonville (Athena Brick Company and Hocking Valley Clay Company), Corning, Trimble and Athens among others. Even today, it is not uncommon to walk down the streets of cities across the U.S. and find bricks stamped with Nelsonville, Trimble, Athens or with the distinctive star pattern of Nelsonville, or the circle pattern of Hocking Clay. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, clay products displaced coal as the primary industry for Haydenville, and it became a major industry for both Shawnee and Trimble.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page   22  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**



**The Claycraft Factory #1 in Shawnee was one of several major clay product companies in the Little Cities of Black Diamonds region.**

Shawnee, New Straitsville, Murray City, and Buchtel all were established by land speculators or by coal land investors at about the same time, in anticipation of completion of the rail lines that would become the C&HV coal branches feeding a river of black diamonds to the railroad yard at Nelsonville. The site of New Straitsville was acquired by investors in the spring of 1869, and the town was platted a year later. Some of the same investment group, at the same time, formed the Straitsville Mining Company to open up the "Great Vein" coal lands in the vicinity. New Straitsville's population exceeded 1,200 a little over two years after its founding, and its coal shipments were greater even than those originating at Nelsonville, making the fledgling town one of the most productive in the coalfield.

Shawnee was the next town to be established in the Monday Creek watershed, again in anticipation of completion of a railroad, this time the NS&S from Newark. Talk of a town at the site of Shawnee began late in 1870. Early in 1872, T.J. Davis, a NS&S investor, platted "Shawnee City," and the first lots sold included an existing farmhouse. This building, which would officially be the first structure in the new town, was immediately purchased and converted into a hotel which served Shawnee for many years. The village was incorporated late in 1873 and grew steadily from that point, reaching 2,770 citizens by 1880, fewer than 400 people short of Nelsonville's population.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page  23 

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

Murray City and Buchtel, located southeast of Shawnee and northeast of Nelsonville along the C&HV's Snow Fork Branch, were started in the winter and spring of 1873. J. Murray Brown of Somerset advertised a sale of lots by his Snow Fork Coal & Mining Company only a week after the C&HV decided to proceed with building the Snow Fork Branch in January of that year. At the junction of Snow Fork and Monday Creek, several businessmen from various parts of Ohio planned a community to be called Bessemer. The plat depicted a community of 1,025 lots, 60-foot wide streets, and parks and business blocks. Both communities' development was slowed by the national panic that began in the fall of 1873, but within about four years, as the economic climate improved and the C&HV once again continued building the branch line, things picked up. Both communities initially benefited from establishment of iron furnaces as well as coal mines. The furnaces did not last long, unable to compete with iron producers in other states who were starting to use high-grade Minnesota ores, but by then the coal industry was able to take up the slack. Bessemer never grew to more than a minor cluster of houses and stores. The town of Buchtel, named for an Akron iron-maker, was about a mile east of Bessemer and was the site of one of the iron furnaces. This community, which was nearly destroyed by fire in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, attracted most of the residential and commercial development that Bessemer was intended to have.

There were other communities in the Monday Creek watershed, usually small and located close to coal mines. Typically these consisted only of a few stores and houses, sometimes company-owned and sometimes not. Among these were places such as New Pittsburgh, Consol, Jobs, Carbon Hill, Longstreth, Doanville, and Orbiston.

Over to the east, in the Sunday Creek watershed, similar development patterns occurred a few years after settlement began in the Monday Creek area. As in the latter area, most of the Sunday Creek development was driven by either the expectation of, or the actual arrival of, the railroad, in this case the predecessor lines of the T&OC. Southward from the northern end of the watershed, the Little Cities of the Sunday Creek area included Moxahala, Rendville, Congo, Corning, Drakes, Buckingham, Hemlock, Glouster, Trimble, Jacksonville, Millfield, Chauncey, and Hocking. The Sunday Creek Coal Company was reportedly the second largest coal mine in the U.S. (Hocking Valley Railroad NR nomination)

As actual construction of the proposed A&LE/T&OC looked imminent early in 1870, investors formed numerous coal companies, and town-building also began in earnest. One of the first communities was a place called Ferrara, located near present-day Corning. This community was destined never to develop beyond a few houses, and nothing remains of it today. Next was Moxahala, platted in the spring of 1872 and located seven miles south of New Lexington along the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section  E  Page  24

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

route of what would become the T&OC. By the end of the year, Moxahala could boast a population of 64, and 373 by 1880.



**Although Buckingham was not a “company town,” the company presence was always felt. The Sunday Creek Coal Company operated a company store there and in other towns where it operated mines.**

In October of 1873, lots were first sold in Buckingham, named for a director of the railroad and on the T&OC branch that would be built northward and westward from Glouster. Buckingham would always remain small, as would nearby Drakes and Hemlock, founded about the same time. All these communities were located at or close to mines operated by the Sunday Creek Coal Company and the Buckeye Coal & Railway Company.

Over the ridge to the east of these towns, the valley of Sunday Creek was wide and straight enough to permit establishment of a yard, enginehouse, and division offices on the T&OC. Joseph Rodgers had a farm at this location, and on it in the summer of 1879 he laid out the new town of Corning. The town grew rapidly as mines opened and railroad jobs became available, and by 1880 Corning had a population of 270.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 25

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

About the same time, a little over a mile north of Corning, W.P. Rend of Chicago established a townsite on leased coal lands and called it Rendville. The Ohio Central Coal Company, from which Rend leased his land, owned part of the town. Rend and the Ohio Central Coal Company



**Corning was destined to become one of the major towns in the Little Cities of Black Diamonds region. This view illustrates the linear nature of the downtown with the houses climbing the hillsides.**

made it a practice to hire European immigrants and African-Americans, which was unusual in the region. By the 1880 census the community's population was about 250, with African-Americans making up nearly half the total. Through the boom period and afterward, Rendville would always be known as a "black coal-mining community."

Over the ridge and about two miles west of Rendville, the Congo Mining Company established a mine and a community in the fall of 1891. Congo was located along the CS&H/Z&W branch to Shawnee and was a company town from the start. Both the Congo Mining Company and its 1892

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   E   Page   26  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

successor, the Turney-Jones Coal Company, built about 250 houses. They perched on two parallel ridges, one of them reserved for the town's African-American residents, with the mine in a valley just west of the town. The mine at Congo itself was something of an attraction, boasting eight-foot-high tunnels and highly mechanized operations. In later years, Congo was noted both for the high degree of company control (some comparisons were made with the community of Pullman in Chicago), its racially and ethnically mixed population, and its ready acceptance of mine unionization and the eight-hour working day.



**Rendville was a compact community with commercial buildings and houses interspersed along Main Street in this 1906 photo.**

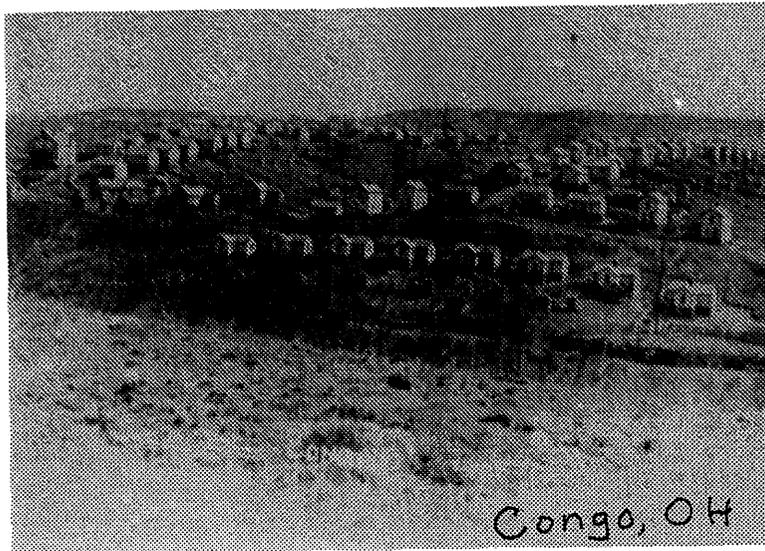
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page   27  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---



**Congo, a “company town,” had a company store, a non-denominational church and rows of nearly identical one and two story houses.**

South of Corning, along the T&OC main line, were several other Little Cities. The first one below Corning was Glouster, where the Buckingham branch of the T&OC left the main line. The town grew from a small rural grocery and post office established in 1876. A plat was filed by the storekeeper and others in May of 1882 for a town to be called Sedalia. After a period of inactivity, town-building began again as mines opened in the area about 1886. The town grew as various developers made additions to the plat, and the name was changed to avoid confusion with another Ohio town having the same name. One of the developers was from Gloucester, England, and proposed that as a name. Postal authorities agreed but changed the spelling, apparently to save people the trouble of mispronouncing the original spelling. The new community within a year had a population of 1,000. In later years, even as the populations of places like Shawnee and New Straitsville declined, Glouster would remain a commercial center second only to Nelsonville in size.

The next town south of Glouster was Trimble, originally called Oxford and settled in 1839, much earlier than nearby communities. Until completion of the T&OC and the opening of nearby mines, Trimble remained a small commercial center serving the nearby area, with a population of 121 in 1880. By 1886 the town was incorporated, and a brick plant established

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page   28  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

employment, as did area mines that opened with completion of the T&OC. Trimble had 440 citizens by 1890.

Just below Trimble was Jacksonville, named for Oliver Jackson, who laid it out in December of 1882. Jackson had been a partner in the Akron Iron Company store at Buchtel. He also sank a mine shaft nearby, hitting a five-foot coal vein, and leased the mine to the W.P. Rend Company of Chicago, the firm that had established Rendville.

Several miles below Jacksonville was Millfield. Like Trimble, it had been established as a local commercial center long before coal mining in the area began. Mines opened around Millfield in the 1890s, and its population grew accordingly. It would become a place of notoriety on November 5, 1930, when an explosion at the mine east of town claimed 82 lives, an event still considered the state's worst mine disaster.

The community of Chauncey (pronounced "Chancy") lay on the west side of Sunday Creek just above the creek's confluence with the Hocking River. It was established in 1837 around a salt works owned by Calvary Morris, an Ohio legislator. The salt operation was purchased by Thomas Ewing and Samuel Vinton, Ohioans active in national politics, and included as investors Nicholas Biddle and Elihu Chauncey of Philadelphia. The hamlet's population was nearly 120 in 1840. As the salt industry declined, Chauncey remained small, but after a mine was established there in 1897 the community became one of the larger mining towns of the region.

About midway between Chauncey and Athens, west of the Hocking River, the small company town of Hocking was established along the west side of the C&HV's main line. The Johnson Coal Mining Company ran a mine and tipple at Hocking, and in the early 20th century the community consisted of several identical houses and a company store.

In addition to the Little Cities discussed above, the Sunday Creek watershed had numerous small coal camps and settlements. These tended to be unincorporated clusters of houses and some commercial structures, usually associated with a nearby coal mine and sometimes wholly or partially owned by the mining company. Such towns included Millertown, Hartleyville, Oakdale, Hatfield, Palos, and Hollister.

### **Development of the Labor Movement**

Nearly everyone in the Hocking Valley was dependent on coal for their livelihood – miners; merchants; owners of small hotels, boardinghouses and saloons; skilled craftsmen and professional people. The wages paid by the mines had a rippling effect through the local economies, so that decreased wages, layoffs and strikes at the mines could have a devastating impact on nearly

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   E   Page  29 

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

everyone else in the community. The market conditions caused pay per ton to fluctuate and put miners out of work for extended periods. In fact, it was not uncommon for miners to be out of work for two to three months of the year. *“In 1880, coal miners made up 54.4% of the employed people in the seven main towns . . . and the proportion ranged from 65.7% in New Straitsville to 12.7% in Corning.”* (Tribe, Sprinkled with Coal Dust, p.37) During periods of economic downturn, of which there were several during the 1870-1890s, the living conditions of miners, which were marginal at best, were strained even further. Not surprisingly, the valley’s poor working conditions -- including long hours, unsafe conditions and low wages -- caused almost constant tension between the miners and the mining companies. This tension ultimately resulted in passage of Ohio legislation regulating mines; and the creation of a labor movement in the valley that had national implications -- with the formation of the United Mine Workers in Columbus, Ohio in 1890.

Coal mine conditions have always been difficult and dangerous. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, as the coal boom of the Hocking Valley was beginning, there were no safety standards for mines, protection for mine workers (including children working in the mines), or a mechanism for negotiating wages or other labor issues with mine owners. The Ohio legislature passed pioneering legislation with the Ohio Mine Law in 1874, becoming the first state in the country to enact laws to protect bituminous coal miners. The legislation provided for the regular inspection of coal mines by a state authority with penalties for those who failed to meet standards; and it prohibited children under 12 from working in mines. This legislation followed several other laws passed in the early 1870s, although these earlier laws were largely ignored since there were no inspections of mines to determine compliance. Even after passage of the Ohio Mine Law of 1874, deplorable conditions were still readily found. Just a few years after the passage of the 1874 law, the State Inspector of Mines reported that children younger than ten to twelve years of age were still working in some mines. In spite of efforts to make mining safer with better ventilation, escape routes and regular inspection of mines, it remained an inherently dangerous job. *“Since 1874, a total of 4,921 coal mine workers were killed while working in Ohio coal mines. These fatalities resulted from suffocation or asphyxiation, fires, explosions, crushing by equipment or rock, and falling down a mine shaft.”* (Crowell, History of Coal Mining in Ohio, p.116).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section  E  Page  30

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---



Coal miners pose at the entrance to the Congo Mine c. 1900.

In spite of efforts at the state level to improve working conditions of coal miners, there was still labor unrest in the Hocking Valley causing two major strikes -- in 1874 and 1884. Both strikes protested wage reductions, which were more than expected for seasonal variations, and safety conditions. During the 1874 strike, a few mine owners in New Straitsville, Shawnee and Nelsonville settled quickly, while others recruited workers to replace the striking miners. The replacement miners were often of a different ethnic or racial background than the existing miners who were largely from England, Ireland and Wales. For example, the owner of the Lick Run Mine recruited African-Americans from Virginia, Tennessee and Kentucky, leading to violence in the valley as 400-500 black workers came to work in the mines.

The strike of 1884 was a particularly bitter one. In 1883, coal companies in the Hocking Valley consolidated into two companies -- the Ohio Coal Exchange and the Columbus & Hocking Valley Coal and Iron Company (also known as the "Syndicate"). During a period of depressed coal prices in 1884, the miners were notified by the Syndicate of a wage reduction along with offering work of only four to ten days a month (Crowell, *History of Coal Mining in Ohio Since 1874*, p.88). This wage offer was rejected by the nearly 3,000 affected coalminers. Replacement workers were recruited and had to be protected by armed guards. Violence broke out throughout the valley and the Governor sent the Ohio militia to the area to help maintain peace. Three months into the strike, several fires were set in area mines including one near New Straitsville, which at times sent flames 100' in the air. Despite repeated attempts to distinguish this fire, including the WPA employing 300 men in 1936, the fire is still burning 100+ years later. The strike lasted from July 1884 until

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section  E  Page  31

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

March of 1885 and in the end, the miners returned to work for less than the initial offer from the coal mine owners. The strike, however, did have a lasting impact on the Hocking Valley –in terms of immigration and ethnic diversity in the valley and the formation of a national labor union representing coal miners.

The technique of recruiting workers to move into the Hocking Valley to work in mines was a constant threat to the existing mine worker population and in some cases it only aggravated tensions between coal mine owners and workers. In 1880, the Ohio Central Coal Company imported African-Americans to work in the mines at Rendville resulting in what became known as the “Corning War” which was, in part, an effort to remove the African-American miners from the valley. They stayed, however, and by 1900, African-Americans comprised nearly 40% of Rendville’s population with another 132 African-Americans living in the Rendville area. Nelsonville and Glouster also had measurable African-American populations in 1900 with smaller numbers found in Congo, Corning, Buchtel, Murray City and Jacksonville. The Lathrop coal camp on Federal Creek was predominantly African-American as well.

In the 1880 census, immigrants from Great Britain (England, Wales, Ireland) made up 90% of the foreign-born population in the Hocking Valley but that was about to change. During the 1880s, German immigrants began to move into Corning, Buckingham, and Hamburg in sufficient numbers that by 1900, Germany was second only to England as the birthplace of the foreign born population. During the mid 1880s – especially during the bitter strike of 1884, new immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe (especially Hungary, Poland, Italy and Russia) were recruited to replace striking workers. By the 1890s, nearly two-thirds of Congo’s population was of Hungarian descent; and the Polish workers settled mainly in Jacksonville. Ethnic and racial diversity in the Hocking Valley was more obvious in some communities where certain ethnic groups had a significant influence -- Shawnee (Welsh), Nelsonville and New Straitsville (English), Buckingham and Corning (German), Rendville (African-American), Congo (Hungarian), and Jacksonville (Polish).

The labor movement in the Hocking Valley continued to grow from the 1870s to the 1890s contributing to the formation of an effective national labor union. Among the first efforts to organize workers was prompted by a visit by Christopher Evans, a Knights of Labor representative, seeking funds for striking workers in Pennsylvania. He was instrumental in the founding of two local assemblies of the Knights of Labor – New Straitsville (1875) and Shawnee (1876). Others soon followed with 39 local assemblies being established in 25 communities by the 1880s, including Nelsonville, Carbondale, Gore, Carbon Hill, Rendville, Zaleski and Buchtel. The Knights of Labor Co-Operative Co. built a major building in Shawnee that housed a store, opera

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section E Page 32

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

house and social hall. It had the distinction of being the only cooperative effort in the Hocking Valley that didn't fail after only a few years.

In 1882, Ohio miners met in Columbus and formed the Ohio Miners' Amalgamated Association, with Christopher Evans (Hocking Valley) as its president. Although the union was battered in the 1884 strike, which was extremely costly for both sides, it did bring about a "*realization that only effective cooperation among miners throughout the United States could stabilize conditions in the coal industry.*" (Winnenberg, Our Journey Continues: The History of New Straitsville, Ohio, p.44) In 1885, Christopher Evans and progressive Chicago businessman and mine owner William Rend (Rendville was named after him) met to try to work with other mine owners to reach an acceptable wage agreement. They were successful and paved the way for a national union. Although the Knights of Labor continued to have a presence in the Hocking Valley, many miners became disillusioned with the national organization's support of miners. A rival organization – the National Federation of Mines and Mine Laborers (later changed to the National Progressive Union) was also seeking to represent miners nationally. Three men from the Hocking Valley – Christopher Evans, William Bailey and William Lewis played a significant role in bringing about a union that united the Knights of Labor with the Progressive Union. In 1890, the United Mine Workers union was formed at a national union conference held in Columbus, Ohio with Christopher Evans (New Straitsville) as its first president.

### **Development and Growth Patterns**

Throughout the Little Cities region, the various communities followed common growth patterns and shared many physical characteristics. The prime determinant of a community's appearance was topography. In the narrow valleys of the creeks and runs of the Sunday and Monday creek watersheds, flat land was at a premium. When a townsite was selected by a developer, the flat areas tended to be platted and built upon first; later development, if it occurred, was located on whatever flat land was left and then started up the adjacent hillsides on one or both sides of the valley. With the creek or run, a railroad line, and the townsite all squeezed into the valley, most communities had a distinctly linear character, especially early in their histories before they began spreading outward. These patterns were typical both of company-owned towns and of those partially or wholly owned by individuals.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page   33  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**



**New Straitsville is typical of the linear commercial districts found in the Little Cities of Black Diamonds communities. The houses line the hillsides that extend from the downtown area.**

In a new town's early days, commercial and residential buildings typically were built along the primary streets and on the most desirable lots. If a community did not experience much later growth, this pattern might persist. In the towns that did grow, however, the increasing land values in the center of town usually pushed residential development a block or so away, and the principal lots and street frontages were built up with commercial structures. Institutional buildings such as churches, schools, and government buildings could be found anywhere, but usually not on prime commercial lots in the center of town. In the first rush of town-building, most structures were built of wood. If the town prospered, many commercial buildings were replaced by masonry structures.

Frame houses were much more common than masonry, even in long-established communities that had experienced considerable growth.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section  E  Page  34

Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio



The coal docks and water tower in Drakes are located within walking distance but at the edge of town.

When later growth occurred in a community, new streets usually were extended in a grid pattern to the extent permitted by the local topography. Even then, however, commercial development tended to stay clustered along the one or two streets where it first occurred. Banks, lodge halls, restaurants, and stores usually were closest to the center of town, while in later years auto-related commercial structures such as garages and filling stations usually were built farther out toward the edges of the commercial district. Hotels usually were located close to the railroad station. Thus, even in towns that had grown outward in a grid pattern, their original linear character usually was still clearly visible in their long, narrow commercial districts. In some towns, commercial district development was intense enough that buildings were built side-by-side, with shared walls and continuous storefront streetscapes. In others, commercial buildings were closely spaced but free-standing, often with narrow covered stairs between them to permit access to second floor apartments.

The coal mines and tipples that provided primary employment for these communities usually were located close to but not in the developed parts of town. Most mine openings were in outcrops in the valley walls, where it was easy to cut into the rock strata with either a slope or a drift mine (a drift mine followed the coal seam underground from its exposed edge, while a slope mine dug

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page   35  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

downward at an angle to reach a seam). Towns and mines usually were located close enough together that workers would walk between home and job. In the communities with clay products plants, such as Trimble, Haydenville, and New Straitsville, the plants usually were located at the edge of town, but again within walking distance.

These development and growth patterns can be read easily in the Little Cities that survive today. Corning, Glouster, Nelsonville, New Straitsville, and Shawnee were the largest towns and had the most intense commercial development. Each retains a long, linear commercial district, mainly along a single street, or sometimes also along one intersecting street. In Nelsonville, still the largest of the Little Cities, commercial development extends further, and there is a town square which is the focus of the downtown area. In all but Glouster, the commercial streets follow straight lines; in Glouster the main commercial street is mainly straight but curves at one end. Residential structures are rare along the densely-developed commercial streets of these towns. Nelsonville and Glouster have several stretches of continuous commercial facades, and Shawnee has one; but in the other towns the buildings tend to be free-standing and the facades discontinuous.

The centers of smaller communities that had less intensive commercial development tended to have more widely scattered commercial buildings, often with residential or institutional structures interspersed. This was the case in Buchtel, Chauncey, Hemlock, Jacksonville, Murray City, Rendville, and Trimble. Even with the loss of many buildings in these towns, especially Rendville, the pattern is still visible.

Some small communities never had more than a few commercial structures and did not have a traditional downtown commercial district. In these cases, commercial structures typically were part of a residential streetscape along the primary road through town. This was the case in Buckingham, Drakes, Millfield, and Moxahala.

Finally, in the company-built and -owned towns, as was noted above, similar patterns of development could be seen, but repeated residential building designs gave them a distinctive "company" character. These towns could be built all at once or like Haydenville, could expand as business grew and more workers needed to be housed. Most company towns had houses in only a few house designs, although in Haydenville, these houses were embellished with products made by the Hocking Valley Clay Manufacturing Company, which was founded by Peter Hayden. Commercial activity, which most companies tried to control and to retain for themselves, tended to center around the company store, though private commercial properties often were permitted either in the company towns or at their fringes, off company-owned land. Communities with these characteristics include Congo, Haydenville, and Hocking.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page  36 

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

### **The "Peak" Boom Years**

Within the five-decade boom period of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds, the 20 years from 1900 to 1920 were the peak of the boom, when population, employment, investment, and prosperity all were at their highest levels.

It was in this period that the Little Cities assumed the form and character that, in varying degrees, they retain today. The communities reached their maximum size at that time; nearly all of the physical fabric that exists today was in place by the end of the period; and a good deal of that fabric was created during the period.

During these 20 years, factors that would affect the future of the Little Cities began to come into play. The technology of coal mining, for example, began to change, with underground mining becoming more mechanized and less labor-intensive, followed by the development of trucks and earth-moving equipment that facilitated surface mining. Both had major implications for future levels of employment. Similarly, the automobile reduced dependence on public transportation such as the railroads, particularly after paved roads became more common. While this meant increased employment opportunities in auto-related businesses, it also meant lower employment levels on the railroads as passenger trains were discontinued, and it meant people could more easily work outside the region.

In 1900, fully 56% of a total of over 6,800 employed persons in the principal towns of the region worked in the mining industry, two percentage points higher than in 1880. In good times this meant prosperity, but such a non-diversified economy meant that prosperity was subject to the whims both of the coal market, which was volatile, and of the national economy, which affected the coal market. The depression of the mid-1890s had been very hard on the Little Cities region, with miners working half-time or less at depressed wages. By the turn of the 20th century, however, economic activity had turned up. Then the panic of 1907, the effects of which persisted until 1910, caused another reduction in coal output in the region. It was less severe than in the 1890s but still had an immediate effect upon the Little Cities. By contrast, coal production showed major increases in 1917 and 1918 as a result of demand due to World War I.

Thus there were cyclical variations but the times were generally good after 1900. It was a period when both new residences and new commercial buildings were built in large numbers in many of the region's communities. The commercial buildings, often of masonry construction, generally replaced existing older structures but also represented some net increase in commercial square footage. Residences, on the other hand, generally were built as additions to the existing housing

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page   37  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

stock. A review of extant structures in the various Little Cities reveals that a large number of them date from the period between 1900 and 1920.

### **The Bust Period, 1920-1950**

Like the growth in the boom period, the general decline in the economies and populations of the coalfield communities in the "bust" period could be read in the coal production figures. The towns' very existence was directly tied to the opening up of the coal resources around them, and the exhaustion of that coal, coupled with technological change in coal production and changes in coal markets in the post-boom period, led directly to declining populations, business failures, and a decline in social, educational, and fraternal institutions.

The Post-World War I recession hit the Hocking Valley Coalfield harder than any previous panics or depressions. From 6.7 million tons in 1918, Athens County's production dropped to 3.3 million in 1922, rose to 4.4 million in 1923, dropped to 2.9 million in 1924, and, with one year's exception, never again rose to as high as 3 million tons a year. In Hocking County, production in 1918 was 2.3 million tons, in 1920 1.8 million, and in 1921 568,000. The mid-1920s saw production rise to as much as 865,000 tons a year, but from the late 1920s on, typical annual production was between 150,000 and 400,000 tons, with some increases to 600,000 to 700,000 tons in the late 1940s. Perry County reported similar figures: production of 3.5 million tons in 1918 increased to 3.7 million in 1920, and then fell to 1.7 million in 1926, and well under a million tons a year until 1941. From World War II on, the county's production was back to a range of a million to over three million tons a year, but this production was not enough to compensate for the loss of production elsewhere in the Little Cities region. For all three counties, the reduced production was a result not only of reduced demand due to the recession, but also exhaustion of coal seams and competition from other coalfields.

Technological changes in coal mining represented another important factor affecting employment and thus the economic lives of the coalfield communities. By 1920 most mines had been electrified, which made mining easier for the workers. However, it also facilitated mechanization of the tasks of mining, making it much less labor-intensive. In addition, surface (or "strip") mining became common after World War II, a function of the availability of earth-moving equipment and trucks. This, too, was a less labor-intensive means of mining which reduced mine employment.

The Little Cities, as a result of these influences, experienced a drastic drop in population, sometimes suffering a total loss of half to two-thirds. Shawnee, for example, dropped from

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page   38  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

about 3,000 citizens in the boom period to about 900. Rendville was almost completely depopulated, as were Hemlock, Buckingham, and Drakes. San Toy, a Sunday Creek Coal Co. company town saw a population decrease from 2500 in 1900 to about 50 in 1928. Larger towns that served as market centers, such as Nelsonville, Corning, and Glouster, had lesser declines but still suffered.



**San Toy, which was a thriving community at the time this photo was taken, is non-existent today.**

Population declines led to business failures and disinvestment in real estate, especially in commercial districts. Fires, vandalism, and random demolitions over the years have caused the loss of numerous structures.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page  39 

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

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### **The Hocking Valley Coalfield Today**

Coal production has all but ceased in the Little Cities of Black Diamonds and in the countryside surrounding them. Physical reminders of the coal industry are fewer every year, as mine and tipple sites and gob piles are grown over with trees and brush, strip-mined land is reclaimed, and buildings and structures deteriorate or are destroyed. Although there are very few surviving tipples, headframes, or other buildings or structures associated with the deep mining industry, and virtually all processing evidence of the clay products industry has been removed as well, there are a few mine buildings at Hocking, a chimney at Millfield and a tipple at Lathrop -- all in Athens County. Where the land once was bare and black with the products and the residues of the coal industry, today it is forested and green, (much of it included in the Wayne National Forest) and the region's rowdy, busy past is hard to read on the landscape.

The network of rail lines that gave the region life has nearly disappeared, too. The former T&OC main line still runs between Columbus and the West Virginia coalfields and hosts several long freight trains a day. Along the Hocking River, the Hocking Valley Scenic Railway provides seasonal excursion service between Nelsonville and Logan on the former C&HV main line. However, all other segments of main line, branch line, and mine spur trackage have been removed. Fortunately the Little Cities themselves are more revealing of the region's past, despite sometimes major losses of buildings and structures. Many significant properties and historic districts have survived, and they embody the region's history. To local citizens, many of these buildings have become the "keepers of the story," and a real movement is afoot to document and preserve them. Working with the tools of the Heritage Area Development concept, local citizens have been working to use the region's heritage as an economic development tool. They have published histories of several communities, gathered photograph and artifact collections, and produced regular publications of regional literature.

Some important historic resources have been listed in the National Register, but there has not to date been a concerted effort to nominate qualified properties. The following properties are so far the only National Register-listed properties:

Haydenville Historic District, Hocking County, Ohio, 1973

Hocking Valley Railway (linear district), Hocking and Athens counties, Ohio, 1988

Sunday Creek Coal Company, Mine #6, Athens County, Ohio, 1978

Nelsonville Historic District, Athens County, Ohio, 1996

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   E   Page  40 

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

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Shawnee Historic District, Perry County, Ohio, 1976

This MPD has been prepared as a means of encouraging greater recognition and preservation of the region's historic resources. The company town of Hocking in Athens County, for example, has a series of identical houses and a company store (one of the few in the region); Glouster has a well-preserved linear commercial district and a railroad depot; the town halls of Rendville, Corning, and New Straitsville are true landmarks in their communities; and the New Straitsville Mine Fire, which has burned continuously since striking miners started it in 1884, crops out into the open occasionally and is yet another living artifact of the vital and lively past of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 41

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

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### Associated Property Types

**Context: Little Cities of Black Diamonds**

**1. Property Type: Commercial**

The Little Cities of Black Diamonds region contains a number of different types of commercial structures. Some are located in downtown areas with closely spaced buildings forming a continuous streetscape; others exist as free-standing structures located in neighborhoods or very small communities; another common building type includes opera houses and lodge halls with commercial space on the first floor, as well as hotels and auto-related businesses. The most distinctive architecture found in the region (in fact it is uncommon elsewhere in Ohio in this concentration) are the commercial structures with overhanging second story porches. The commercial properties identified here are described as sub-types in this section of the nomination.

**Sub-type: Commercial/Downtown Streetscape**

#### Description

Several of the larger communities which constitute the Little Cities of Black Diamonds (including Nelsonville, Murray City, New Straitsville, Shawnee, Corning and Glouster) have definable downtown commercial areas. Although these downtowns vary in size, they typically have rows of commercial buildings, located close to the street that form a continuous streetscape. In some cases, the buildings share party walls, in others they are located just a few feet apart, but they give the visual impression of a commercial district. There is great architectural variety among the individual buildings, with the most common forms briefly described here.

The last quarter of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century was a period of tremendous growth in the region. As towns were established and the population grew to meet the needs of the mines and other industries forming in the region, commercial structures were built to serve this expanding population. Downtown commercial structures from this period were typically brick or wood frame construction and two to three stories in height. They employ design elements of late Victorian commercial architecture including first floor storefronts with large display windows, and tall, narrow upper floor windows. Cut stone elements, pilasters, recessed panels and

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 42

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

corbelled brickwork are typical features. Pressed sheet metal is the most common material for projecting cornices at the tops of the building walls.



**The downtown area of Shawnee illustrates the continuous commercial streetscape found in some of the larger Little Cities of Black diamonds communities.**

During the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, growth continued throughout the region and buildings from this period are also well represented in downtown areas. Brick and wood frame continued to be common building materials, and single story buildings appeared with more frequency along with two and three story buildings. Decorative brickwork in the form of pilasters, recessed panels, corbelled and patterned brickwork were still employed. The projecting cornice began to disappear, being replaced by the almost universal use of parapets.

The downtown commercial districts of several of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds communities were built according to the conventions of building design in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries: consistent setback; building heights of one to three stories; distinctive projecting

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 43

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

cornices and upper floor window treatment; and storefront designs employing large display windows with bulkhead below and transom above.

The single story buildings were typically single-use structures, ranging from simple storefronts with parapets and little ornamentation to bank buildings with stone facades and neo-classical detailing. The multi-story buildings are more common and they housed offices, apartments, hotels or rooming houses on the upper floors. There were also multi-story commercial structures that housed lodge rooms and opera houses above, but these will be discussed elsewhere as an individual sub-type of commercial architecture because they tended to be larger scale and among the most architecturally significant buildings in the downtown areas.

### **Significance**

The downtown commercial structures of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds represent the lively commercial activity that took place in these rapidly growing coal mining communities. Built in what were the latest style or fashion of the period, these buildings were meant to convey a sense of permanence and prosperity. Built during the coal boom years from approximately 1870-1920s, they illustrate the evolution of design that took place from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Within the shared conventions discussed above, commercial building design moved from the more heavily ornamented style of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, to the simpler and more straightforward design of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that still retained all the elements of traditional commercial building design. As a collection, the downtown commercial structures in Little Cities of Black Diamonds communities are significant as surviving examples of how the communities grew and prospered.

Properties of this type are sometimes notable examples of architectural styles from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, but in many cases the style is less apparent, or the design is eclectic, drawing elements from numerous styles or influences. These properties represent the evolution of taste, style, design conventions, and commercial technology.

### **Registration Requirements**

Downtown commercial structures qualify for listing under Criterion A and Criterion C of the National Register Criteria for Significance. The downtown commercial districts of Nelsonville and Shawnee have already been listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 44

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

To qualify for listing under Criterion A the property must be documented to have associations with one of the historic themes identified in the cover document. For Criterion C, the properties must be largely intact examples of late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial structures. It is inevitable that some changes have occurred to these buildings over time, especially given the precarious economy of the region since the Depression era, but minor alterations should not keep a building from qualifying for the National Register. If structures were built in academic architectural styles, the majority of the elements of that style -- storefront, upper-level window treatment, cornices or parapets, decorative ornamentation -- should remain intact. For vernacular structures to be eligible, they should still convey the sense of a commercial structure with a majority of the following original elements intact: a storefront, upper story windows, pilasters, brick recesses, and a parapet or cornice.

**Sub-type:** Freestanding Commercial

### **Description:**

A number of communities have examples of freestanding commercial structures. They are located in residential neighborhoods in larger communities and in smaller communities they may represent the only commercial space in the town. These buildings, as a group, are typically one to two stories in height and constructed in either brick or wood frame. Nearly all have traditional storefronts -- large display windows with bulkhead below and transom above -- although there are a few examples that look more like warehouses and lack a commercial storefront. These buildings tend to be simpler in design than some of the individual buildings in the downtown commercial districts. Most are vernacular in design, although they may feature modest cornices, parapets and decorative details such as patterned brick. False front parapets are a common feature. The two story buildings typically had apartments above, probably for the owner of the business below. Buildings of this type were constructed throughout the boom years from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Significance**

These smaller scale structures represent the commercial activity of the region. Dependent on the growth and prosperity of the coal mines and other area industries, these smaller scale buildings were constructed in residential areas in larger communities and in smaller communities they might have been the only commercial structure in the town. The architecture is mainly vernacular, but they convey a distinctive style, especially those with the common false front

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 45

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

parapets. Although there are a number of examples of abandoned structures of this type, they tend to retain their original storefront details.



**This frame store in Moxahala is an excellent example of a type of freestanding commercial building found throughout the Little Cities of Black Diamonds region.**

### Registration Requirements

These buildings qualify for listing under Criterion A and Criterion C of the National Register Criteria for Significance.

To qualify for listing, these properties must still retain the character of a freestanding commercial structure and retain a majority of the following original characteristics: the storefront with bulkhead and transom; upper story windows; upper story window ornamentation; corbelled or decorative brickwork; cornice, parapet or false front. The buildings should be on their original site and not have major alterations that detract from the building's original form.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 46

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

**Sub-type:** Opera Houses/Fraternal Lodges

**Description:**

Although many of the communities of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds were small in terms of population, they frequently had several very active fraternal organizations with individual lodge halls for each and an opera house or other public meeting/performance facility. Nearly all of these impressive interior spaces were located on the upper floors of commercial structures.

The buildings range in age, with the majority dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, and all are constructed of brick. The distinguishing feature of this building type is the large interior space indicated on the exterior by tall upper floors, usually with tall upper-story windows. The facades of these buildings sometimes incorporated the name of the lodge like the K of P Block in Glouster, the Knights of Pythias in Nelsonville and the I.O. of R.M. in Shawnee. The Stuart's Opera House in Nelsonville also has the name of the building beneath the cornice. While most of the facades are relatively modest with a cornice, decorative brickwork or ornamentation around window openings or in the parapet, the facade of the K of P Block in Glouster has a highly-textured facade with projecting bays on each level, beltcourses between the floors, and a more elaborate cornice and or cornice with parapet design.

**Significance:**

These buildings represent the cultural and social life of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds communities. Nearly every town had at least one fraternal lodge and others like Rendville had five at one time (none has survived). These lodges played an important role in the lives of residents, especially among newly-arrived immigrants and residents in the rapidly growing communities of the region, by giving them a sense of belonging and identification with a special group. The opera houses provided one of the few options for entertainment and cultural activities for residents of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds communities. The fraternal lodges and opera houses played a major role in the private lives of many residents whose work lives were very much controlled by mine operators.

These buildings, as a group, represent the largest and most architecturally distinctive architecture built in most of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds communities. Although a number of examples of this building type have been lost, the remaining structures generally retain a high degree of architectural integrity.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 47

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---



**This opera house in Corning is one of a number of examples that existed throughout the region.**

### **Registration Requirements:**

These buildings qualify for the National Register under Criterion A and Criterion C of the National Register Criteria for Significance.

Buildings that housed fraternal organizations and lodges generally retain a relatively high degree of integrity. To be eligible for National Register listing, this type of building should retain at least a majority of its original exterior features including exterior materials, storefronts at the first floor level, tall upper story windows, parapet or cornice, and some evidence of its original use on the interior in the form of the space where the lodge hall or opera house was located.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 48

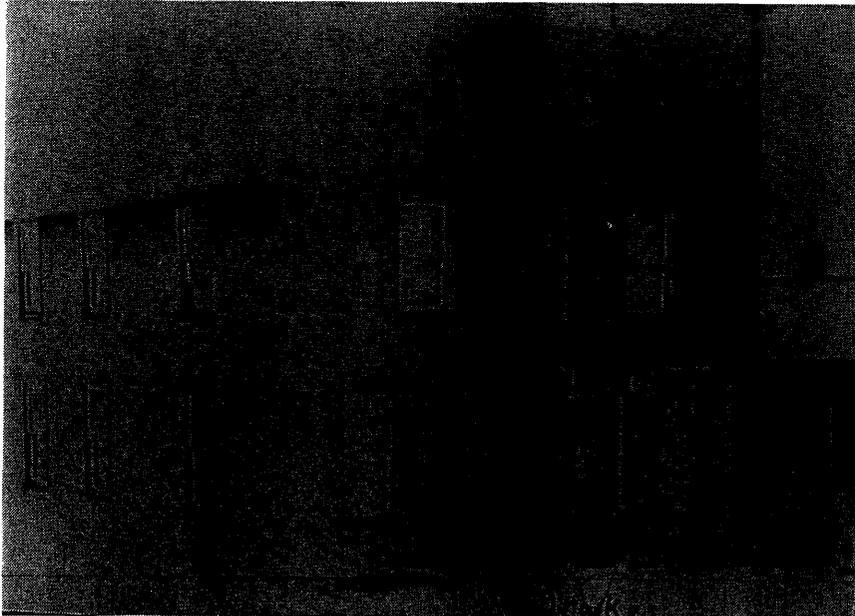
**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

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**Sub-type:** Hotels

**Description:**

Several hotel buildings have survived in Little Cities of Black Diamonds communities. One example -- the Dew House (NRHP, 1978) on the square in Nelsonville -- is a large three story brick building with Italianate features including decorative stone lintels and a bracketed cornice. Others are more modest frame buildings like the two story structures with the overhanging porches in Drakes and Murray City. The buildings were typically located either in a downtown area or near a railroad station for the convenience of its patrons.



**The Hotel Moore in Drakes is typical of the small-scale hotels that were once fairly common in the region.**

**Significance:**

The hotels represent a specific type of commercial activity that was important in these rapidly growing towns. They accommodated newcomers and well as people doing business with the mines and other area industries. They played a social role in the communities and provided a connection with travelers and the outside world in what were fairly isolated communities.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 49

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

Architecturally, even the most modest frame structure had some architectural details of interest such as an overhanging second story porch.

### **Registration Requirements:**

These buildings qualify for listing under Criterion A and Criterion C of the National Register Criteria of Significance.

To be eligible for listing a hotel building should be located on its original site, and retain the majority of the following characteristics: original form without any major additions; original window openings; decorative details such as entrances, window trim, decorative woodwork; and cornice or parapet.

**Sub-type:** Overhanging Porches

### **Description:**

The most distinctive architectural form found throughout the Little Cities of Black Diamonds region are buildings with overhanging second story porches. They appear in many of the communities, but are found in the greatest concentration in Shawnee, where they form a continuous streetscape (which is included in the Shawnee Historic District, NRHP, 1976).

The buildings are nearly all two stories in height and both brick and frame examples exist. The first floor was frequently commercial in nature with the second story most commonly used for residential purposes. The porches were both quite simple with wooden posts supporting the second story porch and more elaborate and decorative with carved wooden brackets supporting the porch from below. Much less common is the form where the upper story porch was supported on columns on the ground. The buildings themselves also varied in design but the most common were either those with falsefront parapets or those with decorative bracketed cornices.

### **Significance:**

The overhanging porch form is distinctive and the greatest concentration in Ohio of this particular building form is found in the Little Cities of Black Diamonds region. The buildings are generally modest in scale but their form and decorative elements contribute to lively and

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 50

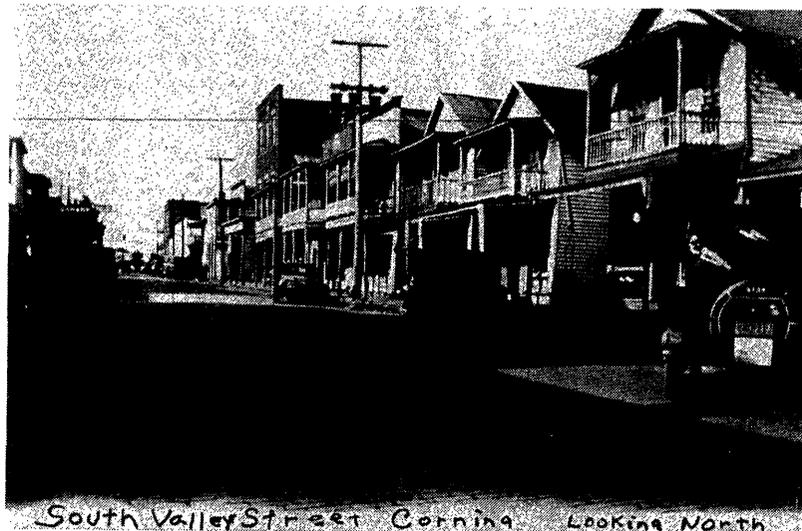
**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

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visually interesting streetscapes. The decorative brackets and railings on many of the porches exhibit a high level of craftsmanship and attention to detail. Although a number of the buildings are now abandoned and deteriorated, they have generally survived with their integrity intact.



**These streetscape views of North Main Street in Hemlock (above), and South Valley Street in Corning (below) illustrate how common this building type was in this region of the state.**



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 51

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

### **Registration Requirements:**

The overhanging porch buildings are eligible for listing under Criterion C of the National Register Criteria of Significance.

To be eligible for listing, the overhanging porch building must retain its original form including the second story porch. It should also retain a majority of other distinguishing original features such as storefronts; window openings and window trim; brackets or porch supports; porch railings; cornices or parapets.

**Sub-type:** Auto-related Commercial

### **Description:**

As the automobile came into more common usage in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, commercial buildings that catered to automobiles, such as gas stations and auto-repair garages, began to appear. These were typically small single story buildings, frequently with canopies, that were located close to the road. They tended to be located on the edge of the downtown commercial district or nearer to the edge of a town. They also appeared as individual buildings along the roadside. Both brick and wood examples can be found. Pavers from local brick manufacturers were the preferred paving material.

### **Significance:**

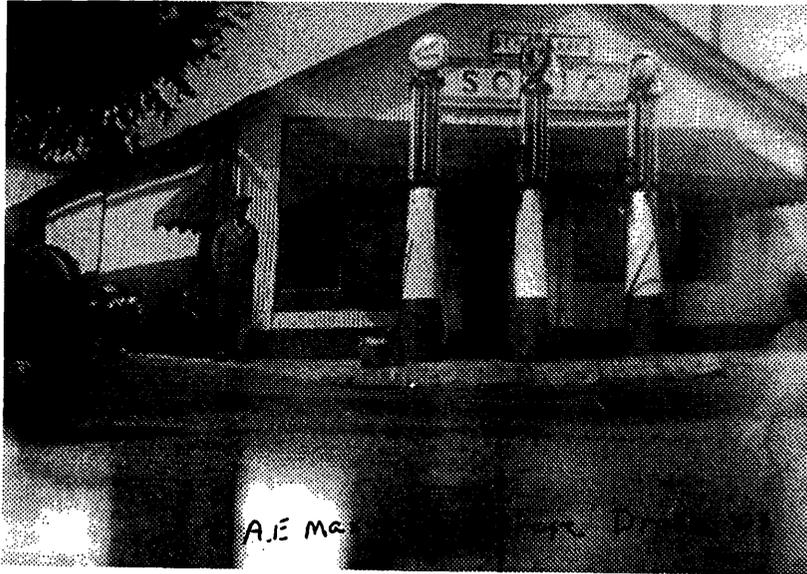
The auto-related commercial buildings reflect the modernization of the transportation system in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the mobility offered by the automobile. The buildings catering to auto-related needs differed from the other commercial buildings constructed in communities throughout the region; they were set back from the road to allow cars to drive up to the building and they lacked the traditional storefront design found elsewhere. Although nearly all of the buildings of this type are vacant, they have survived with their architectural character relatively intact.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 52

Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio



Maxwell's Garage, in Drakes, is an example of an early 20<sup>th</sup> century auto-related structure. The gas pumps, in front, were a distinctive element of the overall design.

### Registration Requirements:

These buildings are eligible for the National Register listing under Criterion A and Criterion C of the National Register Criteria of Significance.

To be eligible, these buildings must retain their original form without any large additions that detract from the building's original design. They should also retain the original canopy (if one existed) and a majority of other distinguishing features including entrance and garage doors, window openings, and brick paving.

### 2. Property Type: Company Towns

#### Description:

Several of the communities in the Little Cities of Black Diamonds region were company towns -- built by the coal mine operator -- to provide for the needs of its workers. These towns, which include Haydenville, Congo and Hocking, typically consisted of housing and a company store.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   F   Page   53  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

Depending on the particular community, the company might have also built a school, church, amusement hall and railroad depot. The one type of building that company towns lacked that nearly every other town in the region had was a town hall. With the exception of Haydenville (which is listed in the National Register as a historic district), where the company's clay products were used in the construction of architecturally distinctive buildings, other company towns generally contained mainly frame structures and the homes were small, and repetitious in design. The company store was the focus for commercial activity in the company town and it was usually free-standing, since there was little or no private commercial activity allowed.



**The company store in Congo was one of the few non-residential buildings in the community, and it served as the focus for commercial activity in the town.**

### **Significance:**

The company town reflects the dramatic impact the coal mine operators had on the growth and development of communities in the Little Cities of Black Diamonds region and the influence they exerted on the lives of its residents. They not only constructed the mines but built entire towns to house the miners and to provide other profit centers -- the company store and rental housing -- for the company. Company town residents relied on their employer for everything --

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 54

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

job, home, food and other necessities. With the exception of Haydenville, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its historical and architectural significance, the architecture of the other company towns was rather unremarkable.

### **Registration Requirements:**

The company towns are eligible for listing under Criteria A and C of the National Register Criteria of Significance.

To be eligible for listing, the company town should retain its town plan and enough housing in original form, without large additions or other extensive alterations, on its original site, so it conveys the sense of the town's original form, design, and building relationships. It is possible that only the company store, church, or other major building from the company town may qualify for the National Register because the majority of housing has been lost or so extensively altered. In this case, the building should retain its original form, and a majority of other distinguishing characteristics such as a storefront, cornice or parapet and any decorative detail for commercial structures; and the entrance, window openings, bell tower and stained glass for churches. Artificial siding alone will not keep one of these major public buildings from being eligible for listing.

### **3. Property Type: Town Halls/Fire Departments**

#### **Description:**

Nearly every town in the Little Cities of Black Diamonds Region (except for company towns) still has a town hall. These buildings were usually one or two story freestanding structures, constructed in brick or wood frame. They housed both offices and a space for town council and other public meetings to be held. Although generally simple in design, a number of the buildings featured bell towers as a prominent architectural feature. Some buildings were altered to accommodate fire stations and had garage-type doors added at a later date. The buildings range in age from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

#### **Significance:**

The town halls are significant as the seat of government for the many communities that sprang up in the Little Cities of Black Diamonds region. They are especially significant symbolically in

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 55

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

this region because of the number of company towns where there was not an elected government but rather the company that controlled every aspect of the lives of its residents. These buildings are significant as public meeting places and in some communities represent the only remaining public building.

### **Registration Requirements:**

Town halls are eligible for the National Register under Criterion A and Criterion C of the National Register Criteria of Significance.

To be eligible a town hall should retain its original form and clearly convey its original function. It should also retain the majority of its original features including door and window openings, bell tower, original siding, and cornice or parapet. Minor alterations such as the addition of a garage-type door for fire trucks will not prevent the building from being eligible for listing.

### **4. Property Type: Churches**

#### **Description:**

The churches in the Little Cities of Black Diamonds communities range in size and design from very simple frame gabled structures to large, brick structures in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural styles. The vast majority of the churches, regardless of size or level of design, had bell towers as a dominant architectural feature and a number also had stained glass windows. There are a few examples of churches that have other related structures nearby such as the St. Bernadette complex of church, convent and rectory in Corning.

#### **Significance:**

The many churches located throughout the Little Cities of Black Diamonds region represent the largest collection of architecturally significant buildings in the region. As a group, they display some of the few examples of definable architectural styles -- Gothic Revival, Romanesque Revival, Classical Revival and Spanish Mission Revival -- found in the region. The quality of materials, craftsmanship and attention to detail frequently surpasses that of nearly all other buildings in some communities. In some cases, the churches also represent the diverse ethnicity of the area, such as the African-American AME church in Rendville; Welsh Presbyterian and

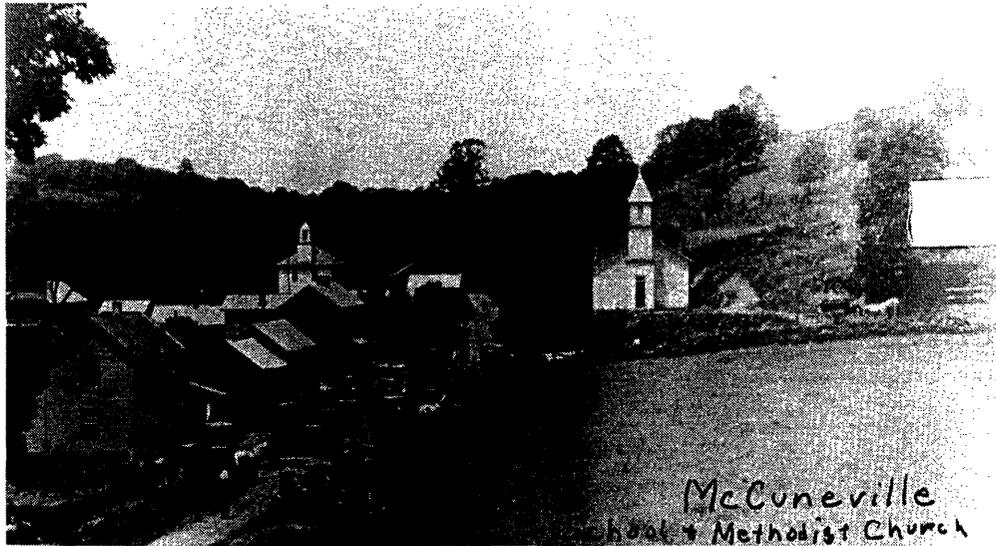
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

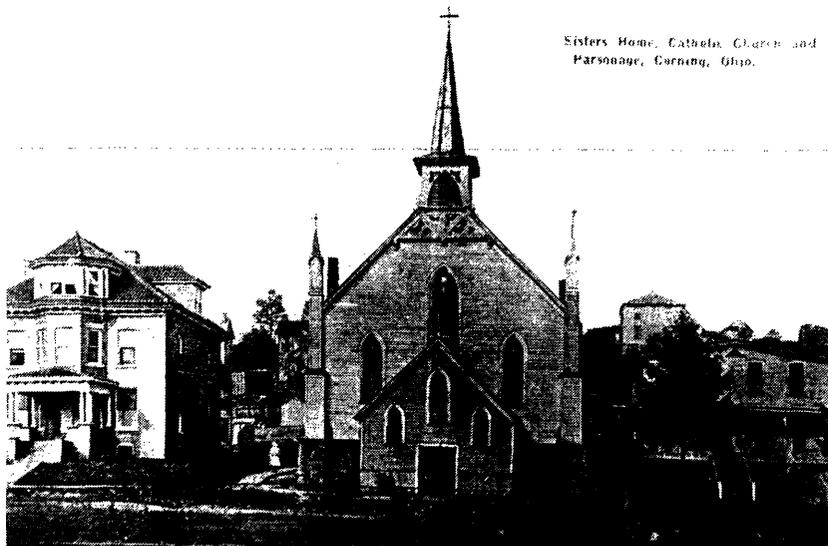
Section F Page 56

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

Welsh Congregational churches in Shawnee; and Hungarian Lutheran churches in New Straitsville and Glouster.



Churches, both large and small, like these in McCuneville (above) and Corning (below), could be found in nearly every community.



Sisters Home, Catholic Church and  
Parsonage, Corning, Ohio.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 57

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

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### **Registration Requirements:**

The churches are eligible for listing under Criteria A (ethnic associations) and C of the National Register Criteria of Significance.

To be eligible for listing, the building must clearly convey its original purpose. It should also retain a majority of its distinguishing architectural features including: original form; exterior materials; window and door openings; stained glass windows; bell tower; architectural ornamentation such as corbelled or decorative brickwork; or other decorative masonry. Artificial siding alone would not keep one of the churches from being eligible for the National Register if other features are intact.

### **5. Property Type: Schools**

#### **Description:**

Nearly every community still has a historic school building (nearly all have been vacated in favor of new consolidated schools) and they most typically date from the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Brick is the material of choice and the most common form is a two story building on a raised basement with a flat roof and parapet. Although few schools can be classified as being a particular architectural style, they do have a number of similar characteristics including symmetrical facades: large window openings with multi-pane windows; masonry beltcourses, quoins, pilasters, window and door trim; and decorative brickwork. The schools usually occupy a prominent location in the community either near the center of town or on a hill overlooking the town.

#### **Significance:**

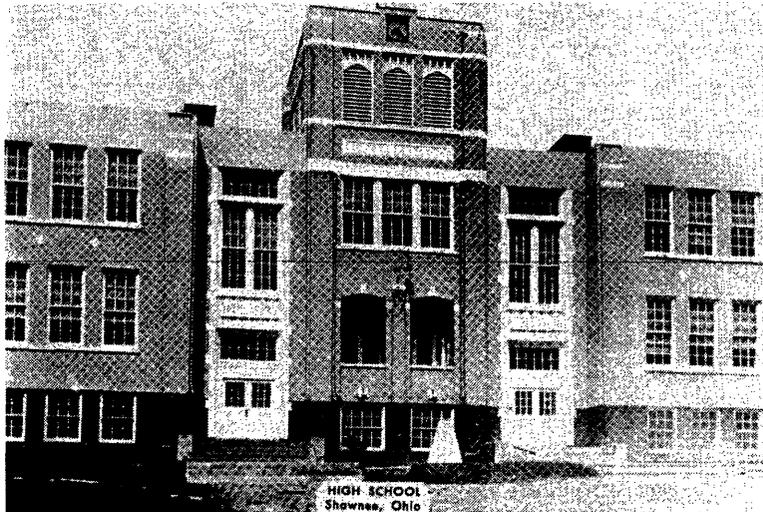
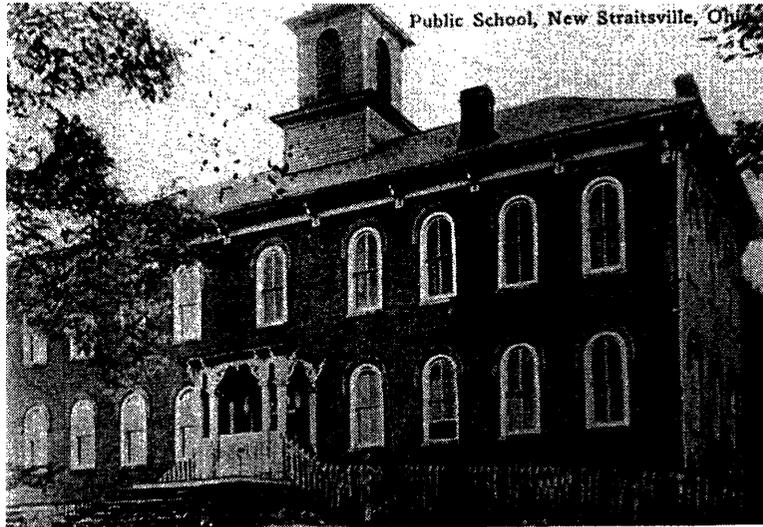
The school buildings are the largest structures found throughout the region. They were designed to be substantial and permanent buildings and clearly convey the importance placed on education in these mining communities. Although most of the buildings are now vacant, they still retain a very high degree of architectural integrity and are visual landmarks in the communities where they survive. Some of these schools were designed by architect William Mills, who designed many of the two story brick schools in the Hocking Valley.

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 58

Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio

---



Schools were frequently the largest and most impressive buildings in communities, reflecting the high value placed on education in the region.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 59

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

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### **Registration Requirements:**

These buildings are eligible for listing under Criterion C of the National Register Criteria of Significance.

To be eligible for listing, schools should still clearly convey their original use. They should retain their architectural integrity which includes having a majority of the following features: original form, location, exterior material, window openings and sash, entrances, decorative features. The buildings should be free of large additions that overshadow the original design.

### **6. Property Type: Residential**

As might be expected in a region that covers parts of three counties, there is great variety in the types of housing built to accommodate the rapid growth which took place from the 1870s to the 1920s. Construction of housing could hardly keep ahead of demand so much of the housing was built quickly and inexpensively and the vast majority of surviving houses would be considered vernacular in design. The few "high style" residential buildings that exist tend to be located in larger communities where they were owned by prosperous professionals, merchants or in some cases the managers of coal mines and other industries. Most mine owners and top executives lived outside the region. The majority of the population worked in coal mines during this period and the housing stock is fairly simple and utilitarian in design.

There are certain building types that do appear repeatedly throughout the region and these are described as sub-types in this section. This is not to suggest that there are not other examples of housing to be found and that they do not contribute to the significance of the region. The registration requirements will be given at the end of this section for all of the sub-types of housing discussed.

### **Sub-type: I-House**

### **Description:**

The I-house is a very common house form throughout Ohio. Mainly dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these houses are usually a single room deep and range from three to five bays wide with a gabled roofline. They were constructed in both brick and frame in this region and usually feature a slate roof, rectangular double hung windows, and a simple entrance. A few examples of

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 60

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

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I-houses with Italianate or other late 19<sup>th</sup> century architectural details can be found. Porches were frequently added, as were rear wings.



**This view of New Straitsville illustrates the variety of vernacular housing types typical in the Little Cities of Black Diamonds.**

**Sub-type:** Gabled Ell

### **Description:**

The Gabled Ell house form is one that is very common throughout Ohio and this region is no exception. The majority of the houses of this type are constructed of wood, although there are also a few brick examples. These buildings are two stories in height with a hipped or gabled roofline and form an L or T in plan. A porch is frequently located in the projecting wing. These houses are larger in scale than the pyramidal and gabled cottages already described. They tended to have decorative siding in the gable ends; shaped window and door trim; and more elaborate porches. These houses typically date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 61

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

**Sub-type:** Pyramidal Cottage

**Description:**

Pyramidal cottages are very common throughout the region. They are typically square or rectangular one story frame or brick dwellings with pyramidal rooflines. Variations include those with recessed porches, porches across the front and a few with dormers. Simple rectangular double hung windows and unadorned entrances are common. Some of the houses were built as multi-family dwellings and have two front entrances.

**Sub-type:** Gabled Cottage

**Description:**

One and one-and-a-half story frame or brick gabled cottages can be found in nearly every community in the Little Cities of Black Diamonds region. These buildings are typically three bays wide with the gable end facing the street, although there are also examples with the gable ends facing the side. The cottages tend to have simple window and door openings, but decorative trim is frequently found on front porches.

**Sub-type:** Cross-gabled Cottage

**Description:**

This cottage type is not as common in the Little Cities of Black Diamonds region as the pyramidal and gabled cottages, but it does appear with some frequency throughout the region. These buildings are one-and-a-half stories in height, constructed of frame and sometimes brick and have an intersecting gable roofline. Simple door and window treatments are common, and many of these houses have decorative front porches.

**Sub-type:** Four Square

**Description:**

The Four Square house form is another common building type found throughout Ohio in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These houses are boxy in form, two or two-and-a-half stories in height and

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section   F   Page   62  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

---

usually have a pyramidal roofline, sometimes with dormers. Simple rectangular door and window openings are common, as are porches across the front.

**Sub-type:** Bungalow

**Description:**

The Bungalow was a common house type dating from the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Examples of this building type tend to be found in some of the larger Little Cities of Black Diamonds communities. Although they vary in details, the bungalows found in the region are usually constructed of frame with wood siding; a gabled roofline with dormers; and measure one-and-a-half stories in height. Front porches are integrated into the design of the house, sometimes as an extension of the roofline and kneebraces and brackets are typical eave treatments.

**Significance:**

The vast majority of the housing found throughout the Little Cities of Black Diamonds region is best described as vernacular with very few outstanding examples of definable late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century architectural styles. Yet, these modest houses provided homes to the thousands of people that moved into the region during the coal boom years from the 1870s to the 1920s. They were built quickly to accommodate the constant influx of people, yet they were placed on individual lots with small yards and created livable communities for the working class. The scale of these houses made home ownership a reality for residents of some communities. In 1900 home ownership was over 50% in New Straitsville, Corning, Trimble and Hemlock and nearly 50% in Glouster and Rendville. The national average of home ownership at the time was 44%.

**Registration Requirements:**

The vernacular housing is eligible for the National Register under Criterion A and Criterion B of the National Register Criteria of Significance.

Most of the housing in the region is likely to be nominated to the National Register as historic districts, rather than individual buildings. To be eligible as a historic district, the majority of the buildings within the district must date from the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, be located on their original sites; and retain at least a majority of the following historic characteristics: original form,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 63

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

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unaltered door and window openings, original exterior material, original porch and be free of any large additions that detract from the character-defining characteristics of the property type.

Individual buildings may be eligible for listing if they are associated with an individual who had a significant impact on the history and development of the community or the region. To be individually eligible, the property must still meet the registration requirements outlined above.

**Sub-type:** Sears Mail Order Houses

### **Description:**

There are at least a few Sears houses in the region including one in Shawnee and several in Nelsonville. The extensive rail network throughout the Hocking Valley made the rail shipment of these mail order houses possible. The Sears Company had a wide variety of sizes and styles of houses available at the turn-of-the-20<sup>th</sup>-century, ranging from small cottages with little ornamentation to high-style large houses.

### **Significance:**

Although few in number, these houses are significant as an illustration that the Little Cities of Black Diamonds were not as isolated from the outside world as they may have seemed. The availability of transportation made it possible to purchase homes through mail-order just as other people, in rural and urban areas, throughout the country were doing. These mail order houses also allowed the buyers to exercise some personal taste in an area where the majority of the housing was built by coal companies or developers building houses for coal workers.

**Sub-type:** Single-Family Residences, with Stylistic Features

### **Description:**

A small number of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds residential architecture from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries can be characterized as fitting a particular architectural style. Of these few buildings, the Italianate and the Queen Anne styles are probably the most common. Both designs led to two to two-and-a-half story houses that were generally larger than the vernacular housing types already described.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 64

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

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The Italianate style dating from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century typically is two stories in height with a low-pitched hipped roofline, broad eaves with bracketed cornices and ornamental treatment at the windows and doors. These houses were built in both brick and frame and frequently had front or side porches.

The Queen Anne style is distinguished by its irregular massing, steeply-pitched irregular roofline, asymmetrical placement of windows and doors; multiple window shapes and sizes; variety in siding materials; distinctive ornamental features and porches.

### **Significance:**

The houses with stylistic treatment are relatively rare in Little Cities of Black Diamonds communities. They generally belonged to prosperous merchants or professionals or to those with managerial positions in the mine or other industries. Few coal operators actually lived in the coal mining communities created by the mines. These buildings create visual landmarks in the communities where they are located and usually exhibit a higher degree of design and craftsmanship than other houses in the community.

### **Registration Requirements:**

These houses are eligible for listing under Criterion B and Criterion C of the National Register Criteria of Significance.

To be eligible for listing, these properties must be intact examples of academic architectural styles and must retain a high degree of architectural integrity including the following: original form; original window and door openings, original ornamentation; and original siding. The building should be free of any large additions or other major alterations that compromise the building being an excellent example of a particular architectural style.

If the building is being nominated for its association with an individual or individuals who had a significant impact on the history or development of the community or the region, the building must retain a majority of the elements described above.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 65

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

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### 7. Industrial/Mining/Rail Transportation-Related Structures

#### Description

This property type includes industrial facilities such as brick and other clay products plants (offices, warehouses, workshops, and kilns); facilities associated with coal mining (mine entrances/shafts, headhouses, portals, tipples, offices, locker rooms, storehouses, warehouses, and workshops); and railroad facilities (depots, section and storage sheds, and offices). Early examples of these property types usually were of wood construction, while later examples could be of wood or masonry. Brick and clay products plants, because they often could use their own products, usually were of brick construction. Coal mining facilities could be of both frame and brick construction. Some of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century tipples were of concrete or concrete-and-brick construction. Most railroad-related structures were of wood frame or heavy timber construction in the Little Cities region. Examples of this property type usually were plain and utilitarian in character, with little ornamentation and usually not designed in any academic style. Although not structures, the dumps, tailings, gob piles and the spoils of the extraction process can still be found scattered throughout the region today..

#### Significance

Examples of this property type, which today are a rare and rapidly vanishing element in the Little Cities region, are significant because they are physical links to the industrial and transportation activities which provided the economic underpinnings of the region. They represent the means by which a large majority of workers in the region made a living, and the transportation network which made that work economically feasible.

#### Registration Requirements

Because their attrition rate has been very high during the last several decades, most extant properties of this type will qualify for listing, even if they are in a partially ruined condition or have been noticeably altered. In order to qualify for listing, a property's function or use should be apparent, so that its importance in industrial production or in the provision of transportation services can be evaluated. Production equipment need not be present in order for a property to qualify, as long as the property's purpose is reasonably clear. While it is desirable that entire industrial/transportation complexes be intact, most will not be; even partially intact facilities or individual surviving structures can qualify for listing.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 66

Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio



Industrial buildings like this brick plant in Corning (above) and the Sunday Creek Coal Mine in San Toy (below) were once a common sight throughout the hills of the region. Now it is rare to find much evidence of the region's rich industrial heritage.

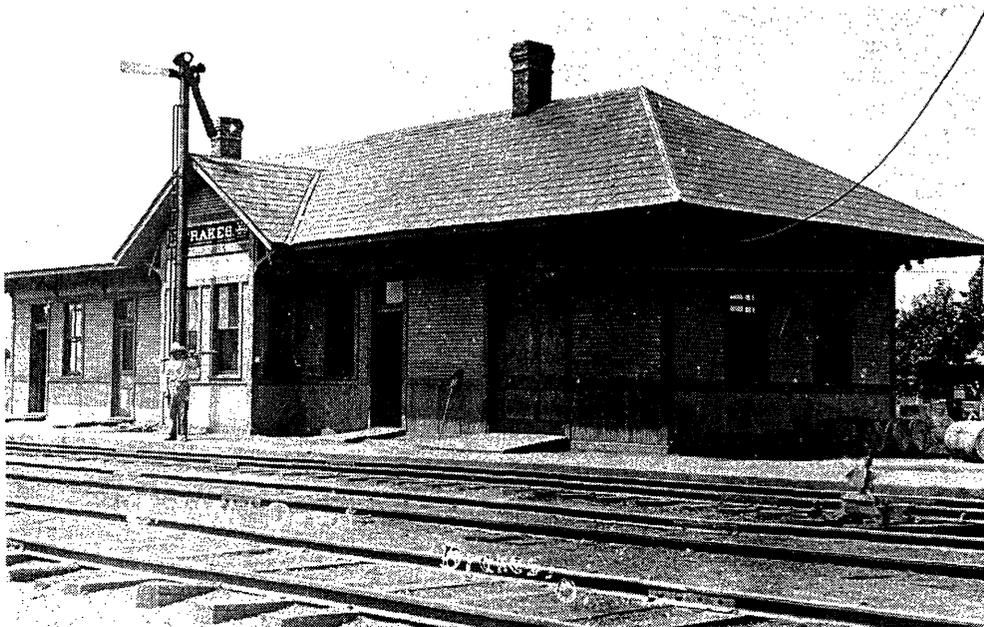


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 67

Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio



Railroad-related buildings, like this one at Drakes, were common at one time.

### 8. Locally Produced Building Materials

#### Description

The Little Cities of Black Diamonds region was known for its production of clay products – especially tile, glazed brick and street/sidewalk pavers. These locally-manufactured products can be found in communities throughout the Little Cities of Black Diamonds – in buildings and in the pavement of the streets and sidewalks in communities. These structures and streets tend to stand out in an area where most of the construction was wood frame. In fact, the churches and schools are frequently among the only brick buildings in a number of communities.

#### Significance

Buildings, streets and sidewalks built from locally-manufactured clay products are a physical reminder of the close relationship between the coal mining and clay making industries. The clay, which was considered the best in Ohio, was found in the same location as the Great Vein of coal. Local coal was used to fire the kilns of most of the clay products industries and the distinctive iron spot color found in a number of the clay products from the region are also distinctive because of

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section F Page 68

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

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the iron deposits found in the area. These products – especially the pavers that are frequently stamped with name of the community in which they were produced – contribute to the variegated textures that help to define the physical environment of the region.

### **Registration Requirements**

Properties or streets and sidewalks are eligible for listing under Criterion A of the National Register Criteria of Significance.

To be eligible for listing, these properties or streets/sidewalks must be relatively intact and the locally produced building materials must be an integral element of the design. For streets and sidewalks, there must be an intact portion at least one block long to qualify.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   G   Page   69  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

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### **Geographical Data**

The Multiple Property Documentation Form for the Historic Resources of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds, 1870-1950, Athens, Hocking and Perry counties, Ohio encompasses the following townships within each county:

#### Athens County

Dover Twp.  
Trimble Twp.  
York Twp.

#### Hocking County

Falls Gore Twp.  
Green Twp.  
Ward Twp.

#### Perry County

Coal Twp.  
Monday Creek Twp.  
Monroe Twp.  
Pleasant Twp.  
Saltlick Twp.

These boundaries include all of the historic and architectural resources associated with the contexts included in the nomination.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section   H   Page   70  

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

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### Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

The Little Cities of Black Diamonds Multiple Property Documentation National Register nomination was initiated by Sunday Creek Associates, a non-profit organization located in Shawnee, that promotes the preservation of the cultural and historic resources of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds (LCBD) region. Among its many activities, Sunday Creek Associates has been instrumental in forming the Little Cities of Black Diamonds Council, with representation from many of the surviving LCBD communities; the formation of local history clubs that have published local histories of New Straitsville and Shawnee; the coordination of the annual celebration of Little Cities of Black Diamonds Day; and the creation of a local history museum in downtown New Straitsville.

When the historic preservation consultants were contacted about nominating selected individual properties to the National Register, they suggested that there might actually be a number of properties that could qualify for listing if they were nominated within the context of a Multiple Property Documentation form. A site visit with staff from the Ohio Historic Preservation Office followed, and they concurred with the approach suggested by the consultants.

Funding was obtained from the Ohio Arts Council to conduct preliminary research for the preparation of this nomination. It included review of historic materials, as well as meetings with local history clubs and the copying of historic photos that were in private hands. Existing National Register nominations and Ohio Historic Inventory forms were also reviewed. An outline of the proposed nomination was submitted to Sunday Creek Associates and the Ohio Historic Preservation Office for review.

A second grant was obtained from the Ohio Arts Council to prepare the nomination. Extensive field work was undertaken to determine property types, condition of surviving properties, and to take current photos to accompany this nomination. Evaluation criteria for each property type was based on the number of surviving resources in each property type and their condition. That is, if a surviving example of a property type is rare, then the criteria allowed for more flexibility evaluating the level of integrity.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section I Page 71

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section I Page 72

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section I Page 73

Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section I Page 74

Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Section I Page 75

**Little Cities of Black Diamonds MPD  
Athens, Hocking & Perry Cos., Ohio**

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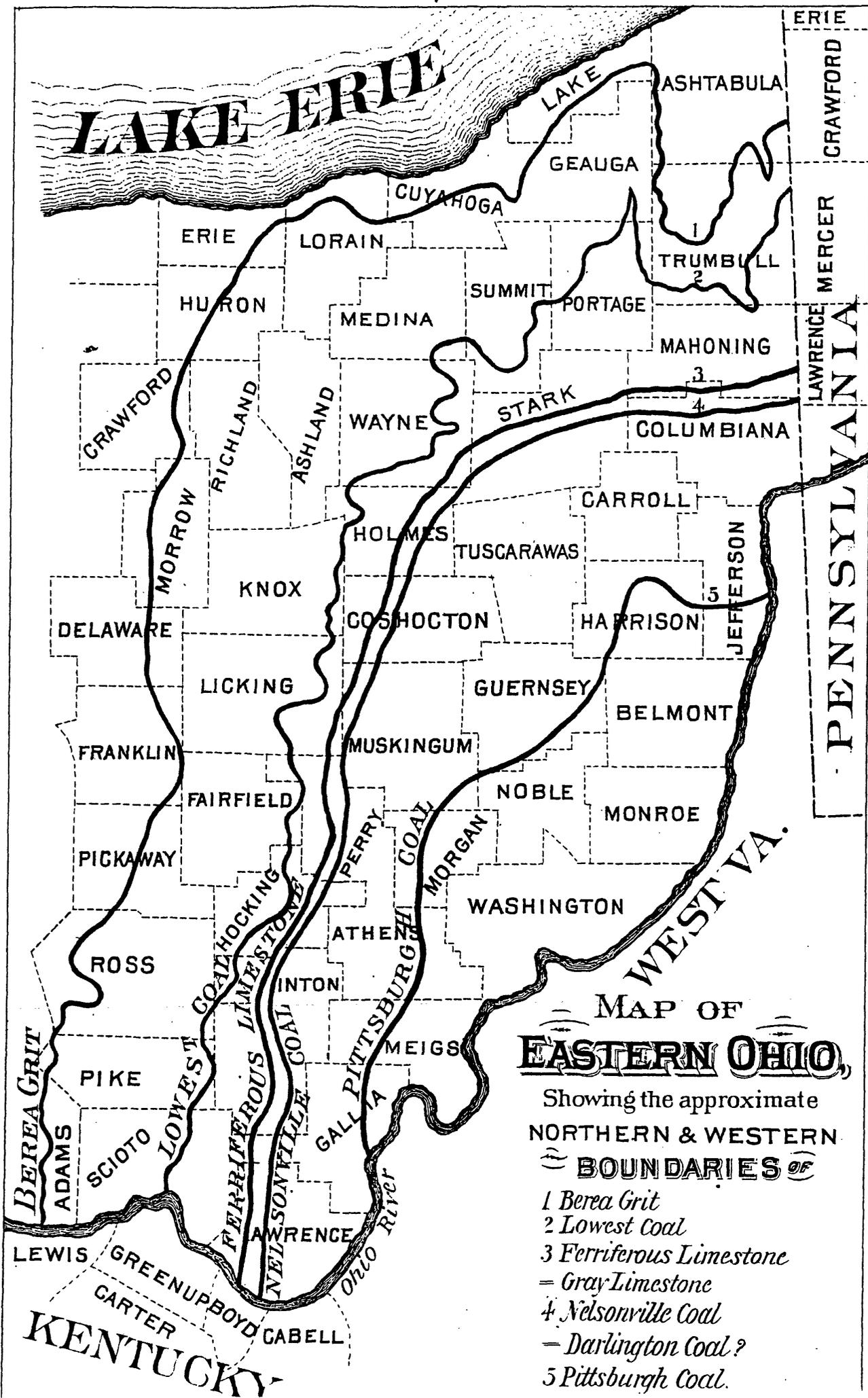
**Historic Photographs**

Historic photographs from private collections of the following individuals in the Little Cities of Black Diamonds region.

William Dunlap Collection

Jim Eing Collection

Glenna Maxwell Palmer Collection



MAP OF  
**EASTERN OHIO,**

Showing the approximate  
 NORTHERN & WESTERN  
 BOUNDARIES OF

- 1 Berea Grit
- 2 Lowest Coal
- 3 Ferriferous Limestone  
 = Gray Limestone
- 4 Nelsonville Coal  
 = Darlington Coal?
- 5 Pittsburgh Coal.

LITTLE CITIES OF BLACK DIAMONDS MPD, ATHENS, HOCKING & PERRY COS., OH  
 MAP # 6