

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Whitsett Historic District

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by the Youghiogheny River, the former Elwell n/a not for publication

Branch of the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad and Elwell Run.

city or town Perry Township

n/a vicinity

state Pennsylvania

code PA

county Fayette

code 051

zip code 15473

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

DR. BRENT D. GLASS

Brent D. Glass 6/13/95

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

PA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

 entered in the National Register.

 See continuation sheet

 determined eligible for the National Register.

 See continuation sheet

 determined not eligible for the National Register.

 removed from the National Register.

 other, (explain) _____

Whitsett Historic District
Name of Property

Fayette County, PA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
48	11	buildings
0	0	sites
5	0	structures
0	0	objects
53	11	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Bituminous Coal and Coke Resources
of Pennsylvania, 1740-1945

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Multiple dwelling
EXTRACTION/Extractive facility
PROCESSING/Processing site

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/Multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

NO STYLE

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STONE
walls WOOD: Weatherboard
METAL: Aluminum
roof ASPHALT
other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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8. Statement of Significance

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

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

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

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

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning & Development
Ethnic Heritage: Black
Ethnic Heritage: European
Industry
Architecture

Period of Significance

1891-1944

Significant Dates

1903
1910

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository:

10. Geographic Data

Acreege of Property 79 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>17</u>	<u>605160</u>	<u>4440760</u>	3	<u>17</u>	<u>606540</u>	<u>4439800</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u>17</u>	<u>605520</u>	<u>4441040</u>	4	<u>17</u>	<u>602220</u>	<u>4439520</u>

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title John R. Axtell

organization For Perryopolis Area Heritage Society

date April 13, 1995

street & number 215 E. Walnut Street

telephone 412-282-3901

city or town Butler

state PA zip code 16001

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name

street & number

telephone

city or town

state

zip code

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties 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.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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7. DESCRIPTION

Most of the resources which comprise the Whitsett Historic District were constructed between 1891 and 1917 by the Pittsburgh Coal Company and its predecessors as a bituminous coal mining community. (This property type is described in detail in the Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Bituminous Coal and Coke Resources of Pennsylvania, 1740-1945," pp. F22-F43.) The district contains managers' and workers' houses (one of which has been converted to a church), mine service buildings, the remains of mine entrance structures and the mine tipple, a mine slate dump, remains of beehive coke ovens, and the abandoned rights of way of two rail lines. The district occupies a secluded and picturesque site, extending along the floodplain and a hillside of the Youghiogheny River valley for nearly a mile in northern Perry Township, approximately a mile north of the village of Perryopolis. The district's residential areas, in the south and west, chiefly consist of standardized duplex workers' houses which are arranged in uniform rows separated by spacious back yards. The former Banning No. 2 and Whitsett mine entrances stand in the north part of the district. Between the mines and residential districts is an extensive mine slate dump. On the riverbank at the east edge of the district stands a brick farmhouse surrounded by a large hay meadow. An abandoned battery of coke ovens lies on the hillside in the extreme southwest of the district.

The Whitsett Historic District contains 59 buildings and five structures. Thirty-nine of the 53 contributing resources are two-story frame duplex workers' houses. Of the other four contributing houses, three were constructed for mine managers, and one is the brick farmhouse, built c. 1845 by the Whitsett family. Additional contributing buildings include: two brick former mine buildings, the former company store annex, and the former water pumphouse, all of which have been converted to dwellings, and the Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church, formerly a worker's duplex house. The five contributing structures consist of remains of the Banning Mine No. 2 entrance, the foundation of the Banning No. 2 tipple complex, the mine slate dump, the remains of a beehive coke oven battery, and the abandoned Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad Connellsville Branch. Of the eleven noncontributing resources, nine are dwellings (including six mobile homes), one is a garage, and one is a building foundation.

The broad plain on which the historic district is sited was formerly Rainbow Island; portions of the back channel remained watered well into the twentieth century. At the north end of the plain, Van Meter's Run emerges from steep bluffs more than 300 feet high; the Rainbow (or Whitsett) Mine entered the bluff south of Van Meter's Run through a drift opening; Banning No 2 Mine later entered the bluff north of Van Meter's Run through a slope opening. Elwell Run forms a broader valley at the south end of the plain; the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad's Elwell Branch to Perryopolis and Star Junction followed this valley to the top of the river bluffs.

The workers' houses are the main focus of the district. The residential portion of Whitsett

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comprises two principal areas: Lower (or Old) Patch, on the plain of former Rainbow Island adjacent to the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad right of way, containing 14 duplex houses, three managers' houses, and the sites of the company store and railroad station, and Upper (or New) Patch, on the hillside southwest of Lower Patch, containing 18 duplex houses and the Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church (occupying a converted duplex) and the site of the Whitsett public school building. (In southwestern Pennsylvania, a company-built town is commonly called a "coal patch.") The district's main street, Lower and Upper Patch Road, connects Lower and Upper Patch and forms Whitsett's major axis. (The Lower Patch Road formerly continued south and connected with River Road near Elwell Run.) In Lower Patch, Lower Patch Road runs parallel to the former P&LE main line. The company store site and three dwellings originally occupied by mine managers face Main Street at the north end; the remaining houses in Lower Patch are on four short streets perpendicular to and west of Main Street. Company houses in Lower Patch are wood frame, four bays wide with entrances in the outer bays, have porches across the full width of the first floor front and rear, and have two large interior chimneys at the gable peak. Houses in Upper Patch are sited on Upper Patch Road and on an unnamed street north of and parallel to Main Street. Houses are similar in design to those of Lower Patch. However, houses on the north portion of Upper Patch Road have two small front entrance porches and single large brick chimneys centered in the front slope of the gable roof. Many of the houses, which were originally clapboard sheathed, have been re-sided in aluminum or vinyl. Other common alterations include window replacement and porch remodeling (see discussion of district integrity below). Each duplex unit appears to consist of two rooms on the first floor and two on the second. The managers' houses appear to contain four rooms on each story.

No institutional or commercial buildings remain from the district's period of significance. The site of the Whitsett School in Upper Patch is occupied by a c. 1970 concrete foundation intended for the Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church. The existing Pilgrim Rest church building has been converted from a worker's house by the addition of a gabled entrance vestibule on its north gable elevation and a one-story shed roofed wing on the east. Wooden crosses and a sign are attached to the building's aluminum siding. Interior partitions have been altered to accommodate the sanctuary. Adjacent to the site of the company store (which burned in 1938) on Lower Patch Road stands the one story, L-shaped former company store annex, now converted to a dwelling with the addition of a front deck and new wood plank siding.

The residential district also contains four wood frame duplex houses on River Road, known as "River Row," and four other houses along River Road which were not developed or leased as company houses. The most notable of these is the c. 1845 Greek Revival style five bay brick Whitsett House on the river bank east of Lower Patch. The Whitsett House has paired end chimneys, 6/6 sash, a central entrance with side lights and transom surround, and a triple window in the center of the second story consisting of narrow 2/2 sash flanking a 6/6 sash. A date block in

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the north chimney gives the date 1873. The date may indicate the year of repairs to the chimney or house; the building's style and method of construction indicate that it was built before 1850.

Resources associated with the Whitsett and Banning No. 2 mines are located in the northern portion of the district. They include the following structures and buildings:

- The now-sealed brick-lined circular entrance to the Banning No. 2 mine shaft and contiguous remains of reinforced concrete and brick machinery houses and tipple/conveyor foundations; built c. 1902, rebuilt c. 1926.
- The concrete foundation of the c. 1926 Banning No. 2 tipple and aerial tramway terminal on the Youghiogheny River bank, approximately 500 feet from the mine entrance.
- Two adjacent red brick gable roof buildings located adjacent to the former Whitsett mine entrance. Built c. 1895, they reportedly served both the Whitsett and Banning No. 2 mines. One is two-stories high and may have served as the mine office. The other is one-story high and may have served as the wash house and lamp house. Both are now dwellings.
- The remains of the mine slate dump (locally called a "gob pile"), located on the plain between the mines and the residential district. The dump has been carved into a moon-like landscape of boulders and steep slopes as the result of gravel removal operations.
- The remains of a battery of 40 beehive coke ovens on the hillside above the former P&LE Star Junction branch, southwest of the residential district.

The district also contains eleven noncontributing resources. These include three one story ranch style houses and six mobile homes, all dating after 1960. Other noncontributing resources include a one story repair garage at the north end of Lower Patch Road and the concrete foundation on Upper Patch Road intended for the new Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church. All noncontributing resources conform to the historic grid plan of the district and do not detract from the visual uniformity of the town plan. In accordance with the Registration Requirements for mining communities which are set forth in the "Bituminous Coal and Coke Resources of Pennsylvania" Multiple Property Documentation Form, the Whitsett Historic District retains integrity of design, feeling, location and setting. The essential plan, massing and design of Whitsett retains its identity as a typical mining community. This holds true despite alterations on many houses to sheathing, windows and porches. The mine and coke oven resources retain sufficient integrity of feeling, location and setting to convey a clear sense of their historic use and appearance, and thus to warrant designation.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

As a well-preserved example of a company-owned bituminous coal mining community, the Whitsett Historic District is historically significant in the areas of community planning and development, African American and European ethnic heritage, and industry. From its beginning in 1891 through 1944, Whitsett, like similar mining communities in the region, was built and operated by its owners solely for the production of coal and coke, making use of increasingly mechanized technology. Despite its relatively isolated location, Whitsett's mines and ovens attracted eastern European immigrants and African American immigrants from southern states. The district also possesses architectural significance for its stock of characteristic Western Pennsylvania miners' houses, which were built in at least three phases between 1891 and 1918 by Whitsett's corporate owners.

The site of present day Whitsett (much of it then comprising Rainbow Island) was patented in 1787 by Joseph Finley, under a Pennsylvania warrant for the land. In 1845, Ralph C. Whitsett purchased the tract and built the existing Whitsett house. Although Whitsett appears to have made his living as a farmer and general merchant, it is likely that he also gathered and sold the coal which outcropped along the river bluffs on his land. The Pittsburgh coal seam rises to the surface along the bluffs above Whitsett. This is due to an long upward fold in the geological strata, the Fayette Anticline. To the east of Whitsett lies a ten mile wide area called the "barren measures" by coal operators, where, over geologic time, the Fayette Anticline was eroded down to rock formations below the Pittsburgh coal seam. The anticline and barren measures divide the Connellsville District, with its low-volatile coking coal, from the remainder of the Pittsburgh coal seam to the west. Although the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad line from Connellsville to Pittsburgh opened across the Youghiogheny River in 1855, spurring the development of mines in the Connellsville District, the unnavigable river was a barrier to getting the Whitsett coal to market.

In 1884, however, the main line of the Pittsburgh, McKeesport & Youghiogheny Railroad (later the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie) was built through the Whitsett farm to tap on the Connellsville coke region, which was developing rapidly to meet the growing fuel demands of Pittsburgh's iron and steel industry. By 1890, reports of the Pennsylvania Inspector of Mines show the Rainbow Mine to be operating in Whitsett. The new mine was owned by Henry Luce (whose family farm bordered the west side of the Whitsett farm) and two sons of Ralph Whitsett, Albinus H. Whitsett and David P. Whitsett. D.P. Whitsett was also mine superintendent. Total employment at this relatively small mine was 48 in 1890 and 126 in 1892. Ownership of the Rainbow Mine changed hands twice between 1892 and its 1901 purchase by the Pittsburgh Coal Company. Most surface rights continued to be held by members of the Whitsett family, however, and oral tradition holds that Ralph C. Whitsett or his sons constructed several non-standardized frame houses between the P&LE tracks and the river for workers and as their own homes during this period. One survives

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today at the corner of River and Weiss roads. The remainder of the mine's work force apparently traveled the one mile from Perryopolis or lived in other, now demolished housing in Whitsett.

Between 1901 and 1905 the newly formed Pittsburgh Coal Company acquired the Whitsett Mine and purchased extensive additional surface and mineral rights in and around Whitsett. Financed by such prominent Pittsburgh business figures as A.W. Mellon and H.C. Frick, the Pittsburgh Coal Company was an amalgamation of many smaller mining companies in an area south of Pittsburgh including numerous mines in the Youghiogheny and Monongahela valleys. By 1905, the Pittsburgh Coal Company employed more workers and produced more coal than any other Pennsylvania mining firm. Pittsburgh Coal opened the Banning No. 2 Mine, about 500 feet north of the smaller Whitsett Mine, in 1902. Banning No. 2 made more extensive use of new mining technology, utilizing, for instance, four steam engines generating 1,246 horsepower, compared with the older mine's 105 total horsepower produced by three engines. By 1910, Whitsett Mine had closed and Banning No. 2 had grown to be the largest of Pittsburgh Coal's seventeen Youghiogheny Valley mines, employing 659 and producing 535,484 tons of coal. Although coal production at Banning No. 2 peaked during the years of the First World War at over 877,000 tons annually, Pittsburgh Coal continued to modernize operations at the mine throughout the 1920s. The mine's mechanization included seven chain breast and eight short wall coal cutting and loading machines, all propelled by electricity generated by the mine's power house. Coal haulage was handled by six electric locomotives (which continued, however, to be supplemented by mule power in remote parts of the mine through the 1940s). Also in the 1920s, Pittsburgh Coal constructed a large new mine entrance and tipple complex for Banning No. 2 and connected it by aerial tramway across the river with a new slate dump and a loading facility on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. (Concrete and brick remains of the mine entrance and tipple complexes survive, see Description.) A large coal washing plant was constructed at the same time on the Youghiogheny River about two miles north of Whitsett, near the Banning No. 1 mine. Records make no indication as to whether the coal produced by Banning No. 2 was supplied to a particular class of customers. Presumably, the mine's output went to byproduct coke plants, other industrial operations, and residential consumers.

At about the same time Banning No. 2 opened in 1902, the Anica Coke Works built 40 beehive ovens into the hillside above Rainbow Island, adjacent to the P&LE's newly built Elwell (Star Junction) branch. The coke works appears to have been owned and operated independently of Whitsett's mines; in 1914 Anica was owned by Wilkey & Feather Coke Co. of Uniontown. Surviving records do not indicate what customers Anica's ovens supplied with coke.

Whitsett's standardized houses were most likely constructed by the Pittsburgh Coal Company in two phases during the early years of Banning No. 2 mine's operation, as the company's needs quickly outstripped the local housing and labor supply. The first phase,

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universally referred to as Lower or Old Patch, was completed by 1903, when employment at Whitsett's mines grew from 130 to 459 workers. Lower Patch, located just south of the mine shafts and slate dump, originally comprised approximately 23 eight room duplex houses built on four short streets running perpendicular to the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Connellsville line tracks and Whitsett's main street, Lower Patch Road. To the north of the workers houses on Lower Patch Road were built three single family houses for mine managers and the company store.

The second phase of construction in Upper or New Patch was likely completed by 1910, when employment at Banning No. 2 mine increased from 459 to 659 workers. Upper Patch was sited on a hillside to the south of Lower Patch. It originally consisted of approximately 27 eight room duplex houses. The houses lined both sides of Upper Patch Road (the south extension of the main street) and one side of a parallel street to the west. At about the same time, a row of four houses was built below Upper Patch on River Road.

Records do not show who was responsible for the plan of the community or the design of its houses, however it is evident that the individuals responsible approached their assignment primarily as an engineering task. The houses constructed in the two phases differed only in minor details. All of Whitsett's company owned houses, including the managers' houses, were stylistically plain and functional. Ornament was largely limited to lathe-turned porch posts. The town's orthogonal plan of streets and buildings was simple to construct and maintain. Pittsburgh Coal's priorities in choosing the site of the community are apparent: the slate dump was located closest to the mine, the store and managers' houses next, and the workers houses beyond. It is likely that the town was sited on the inland edge of the river plain for purely utilitarian reasons: to avoid seasonal floods and to preserve the largest undivided tract of company land for other uses (e.g., agriculture, future development or expansion of the slate dump).

Pittsburgh Coal provided a number of services to tenants, as was customary to company owned communities. Its company store subsidiary, the Federal Supply Company, operated its Whitsett store from 1903 to 1938. Pittsburgh Coal conducted an annual "Best Garden" contest and saw to it that yards in the town were fenced and well kept. Town streets were kept paved with "red dog" (gravel from mine waste) throughout the period of company ownership. The company began providing electricity and water service to its Whitsett tenants in the late 1920s. It also provided a community health clinic beginning in the 1930s, first in a converted house in Upper Patch and later in the former power house near the mine portal, which was converted into a community center in the late 1930s. Both buildings are now demolished. The now-demolished Whitsett Public School in Upper Patch was also a focal point for the community, housing such events as May Day and Halloween celebrations. The broad plain between Lower Patch and the river has historically served as Whitsett's baseball and football field.

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No church building was erected in Whitsett during company ownership, in large part due to the community's proximity to Perryopolis and its churches. However, residents upon occasion held services in their houses, in the school, and in the community center after it opened in the 1930s. The Pilgrim Rest Baptist Church met first in the school and later the community center prior to moving into its present building in the 1940s. (The Pilgrim Rest church is a focal point for formal and informal gatherings of Whitsett's African-American community.)

A highly significant element of Whitsett's history is its development as a racially and ethnically diverse community, due both to larger patterns of migration and to labor policies of the Pittsburgh Coal Co. As in other Fayette County mining towns, a significant portion of Whitsett's labor force was composed of Eastern European immigrants, notably Hungarians and Slovaks, many recruited by company agents in Europe or at American ports of entry. Whitsett was particularly attractive as a destination because, unlike the the coal mines of the nearby Connellsville region which had been non-union since 1893, Banning No. 2 (along with the mines downstream of it on the Youghiogheny River) was in the unionized Pittsburgh district. While many immigrants to Whitsett and other coal communities had been miners in Europe, some were unskilled and most suffered because of difficulty at work with their new language, sometimes at the cost of accidents. However, in the same way that this country's urban neighborhoods functioned as cultural melting pots in the first decades of the 1900s, encouraging newcomers and their children to assimilate into American culture, so did isolated coal mining communities such as Whitsett.

Whitsett was also the destination of African-Americans, who between 1910 and 1930 left the rural south to seek wage-paying jobs in northern states, in what has come to be called the Great Migration. While the African-American population of Whitsett grew most dramatically in the 1920s, census records show that blacks, most immigrants from Virginia or North Carolina, were employed as coal miners in Perry Township as early as 1900. Class pictures from Whitsett School show African-American students in 1915.

The decade following the First World War was one of great difficulty for coal producers as demand dropped precipitously, spurred by over competition and the growth of other energy technologies. Labor-management relations, never very good in the coal industry, grew worse, with strikes in 1919 and 1922. Both union and non-union mines in southwestern Pennsylvania had historically limited African-American miners to working only at unskilled positions. However, in 1925, Pittsburgh Coal abrogated its 1924 contract with the United Mine Workers of America and established an open shop policy, for the first time giving African-American miners the opportunity to compete for and obtain skilled, high-paying mine jobs, such as shot firer. Although the UMWA did not immediately go on strike, union miners who refused to work under the new terms were replaced, in many instances by African-American miners. By 1927, 39% of

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the Banning No. 2 work force was African-American. Overall, Pittsburgh Coal Company's employment level of African-American miners in its 18 Pittsburgh district mines was 50% in 1927; this compares with figures of between 10% and 1% for such major Western Pennsylvania producers as Frick Coal & Coke and Vesta Coal. Some racial tensions reportedly existed in Whitsett during this era, especially surrounding the UMWA's unsuccessful 1927 coal strike (when Ku Klux Klan members reportedly sought to harass Eastern European Catholics as well as African-Americans in Whitsett). However, oral sources indicate that before, during and after the 1925-1933 open shop period there was no official segregation in Whitsett, but rather an overall atmosphere of tolerance. The passage of the New Deal in 1933 led renewed UMWA representation of the racially integrated Banning No. 2 work force. Mine employment, however, declined by almost half in the 1920s and 1930s. During this period some residents worked at Banning No. 1 and other Pittsburgh Coal Company mines down the Youghiogheny from Whitsett. Although Banning No. 2 saw increase in coal production after the beginning of World War II, the Pittsburgh Coal Company ceased operations at the mine following a roof collapse in 1944.

Also in 1944, Pittsburgh Coal sold the major portion of its surface rights in Whitsett to Morris Weiss, then the owner of an independent general store located on Weiss Street (now demolished). Weiss subdivided the land and resold the houses, in some cases to then-existing tenants. Following its cessation of operations there, Pittsburgh Coal Co. leased Banning No. 2 to the Robertson & Sheppard Coal Company in 1948. Banning No. 2 does not appear in state mine reports after that date, although it is reported that hand production of coal continued at the mine until 1954. Today Whitsett is a primarily residential community whose residents work in Perryopolis, the Monongahela Valley and Pittsburgh. Although the P&LE railroad ceased operations through Whitsett in the 1980s, the planned conversion of the railroad right of way to a bicycle trail has stirred interest in the community regarding its potential role as a recreational and heritage tourism resource.

The development and operation of coal communities in Pennsylvania is described in detail in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF), "Bituminous Coal and Coke Resources of Pennsylvania, 1740-1945." Like many other western Pennsylvania coal communities, Whitsett was built and reached its peak of operation during what the MPDF calls the golden era of coal, coke and steel, from 1880 to 1920. Compared with other coal communities in the Connellsville and Klondike mining districts, Whitsett retains a strong sense of coherence and identity as a planned industrial community, as well as a beautiful natural setting. Whitsett compares favorably with such other Fayette County coal and coke company towns as Star Junction in Perry Township, Smock in Franklin Township and Leisenring in Dunbar Township. All share orthogonal plans imposed upon the natural landscape. Leisenring, a Frick Company town in the Connellsville coke district, has a housing stock which is older, smaller and less well-built than Whitsett's; Smock, in the Klondike District, housing is newer, larger and more varied architecturally; Star Junction is

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contemporary with and comparable to Whitsett in terms of housing design and quality.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

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Atlas of the County of Fayette and the State of Pennsylvania. Philadelphia: G.M. Hopkins & Co., 1872.

Ellis, Franklin. *History of Fayette County, Pennsylvania.* Philadelphia: L.H. Everts & Co., 1882.

Heald, Sarah H., ed. *Fayette County, Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites.* Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1990.

Interview with William Mills, Jr., Whitsett resident and retired miner, July 2, 1992.

Interview with Joseph Toth, former Whitsett resident and retired miner, July 22, 1992.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Whitsett Historic District, Fayette County, PA

Section number 9, 8 Page 10

Technology, 1925.

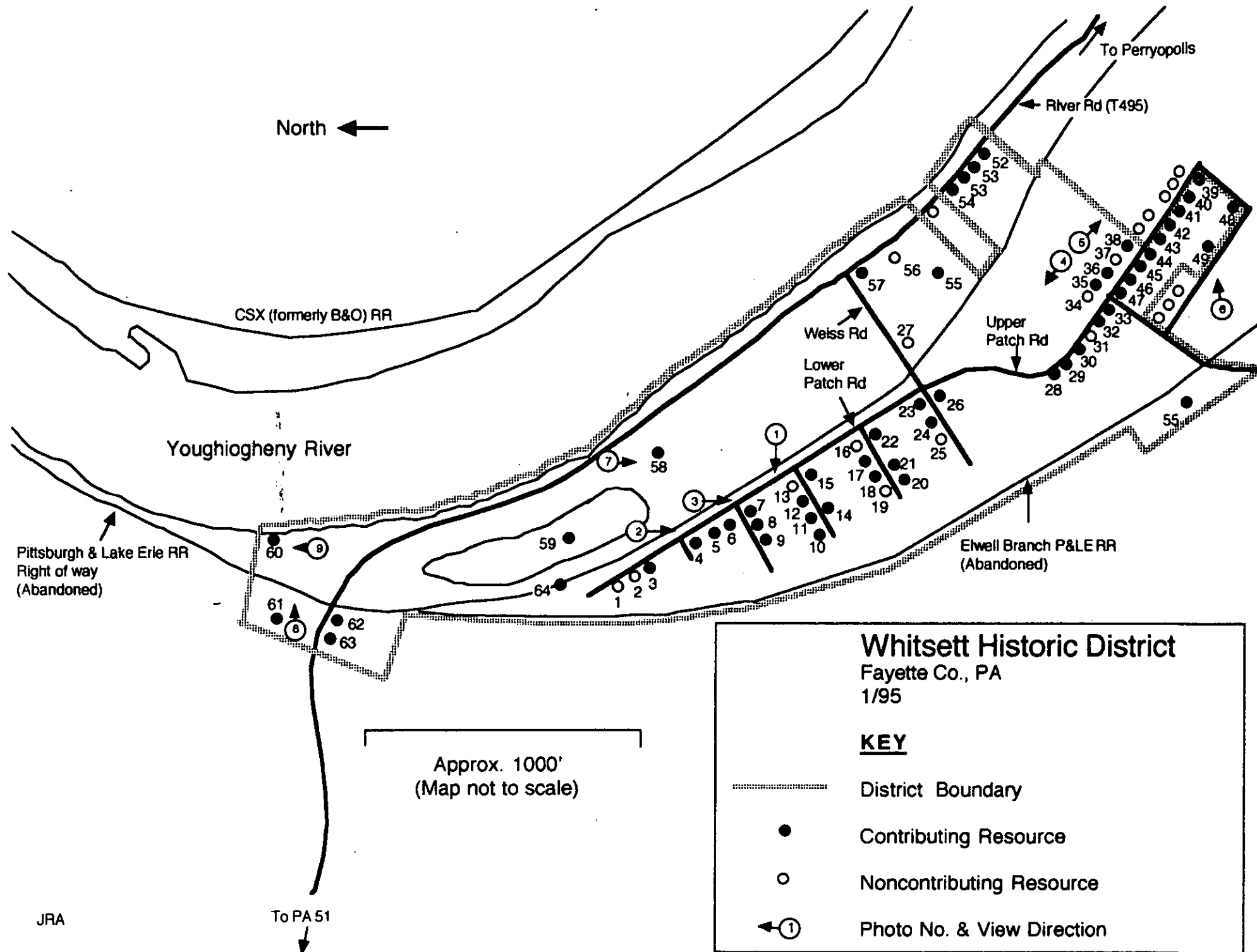
10. GEOGRAPHIC DATA

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the mean high water mark of the east bank of the Youghiogheny River 50' north of the northern side of the former Banning No. 2 tipple and cable lift; thence in a southeasterly direction 3600' along the said high water mark to a point; thence southwesterly 300' to the north side of the former Pittsburgh and Lake Erie R.R. Connellsville Branch right of way; thence southeasterly 200' along said right of way to a point; thence northeasterly 250' to the aforesaid high water mark; thence 350' along said high water mark to a point; thence southeasterly 200' to the aforesaid railroad right of way; thence southeasterly 250' along said right of way to a point; thence southwesterly 200' to the north right of way line of Upper Patch Road; thence 300' along said right of way line to a point; thence southwesterly 250' along the west right of way line of an unnamed street to a point; thence northwesterly 300' along said right of way to a point; thence northeasterly 150' to a point; thence northwesterly 400' to the east right of way of an unnamed street; thence southerly 350' along said right of way to a point; thence northwesterly 800' to a point; thence southwesterly 300' to the south side of the former Pittsburgh and Lake Erie R.R. Elwell Branch right of way; thence northwesterly 3400' along said right of way to a point; thence westerly 300' to a point; thence northerly 650' to a point; thence easterly 450' to the point of beginning.

VERBAL BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION





The boundary includes all residential portions of Whitsett which retain architectural integrity, and all associated industrial remains, including the Banning No. 2 mine shaft entrance, tipple foundation and other related structures, and the Anica Coke Works.

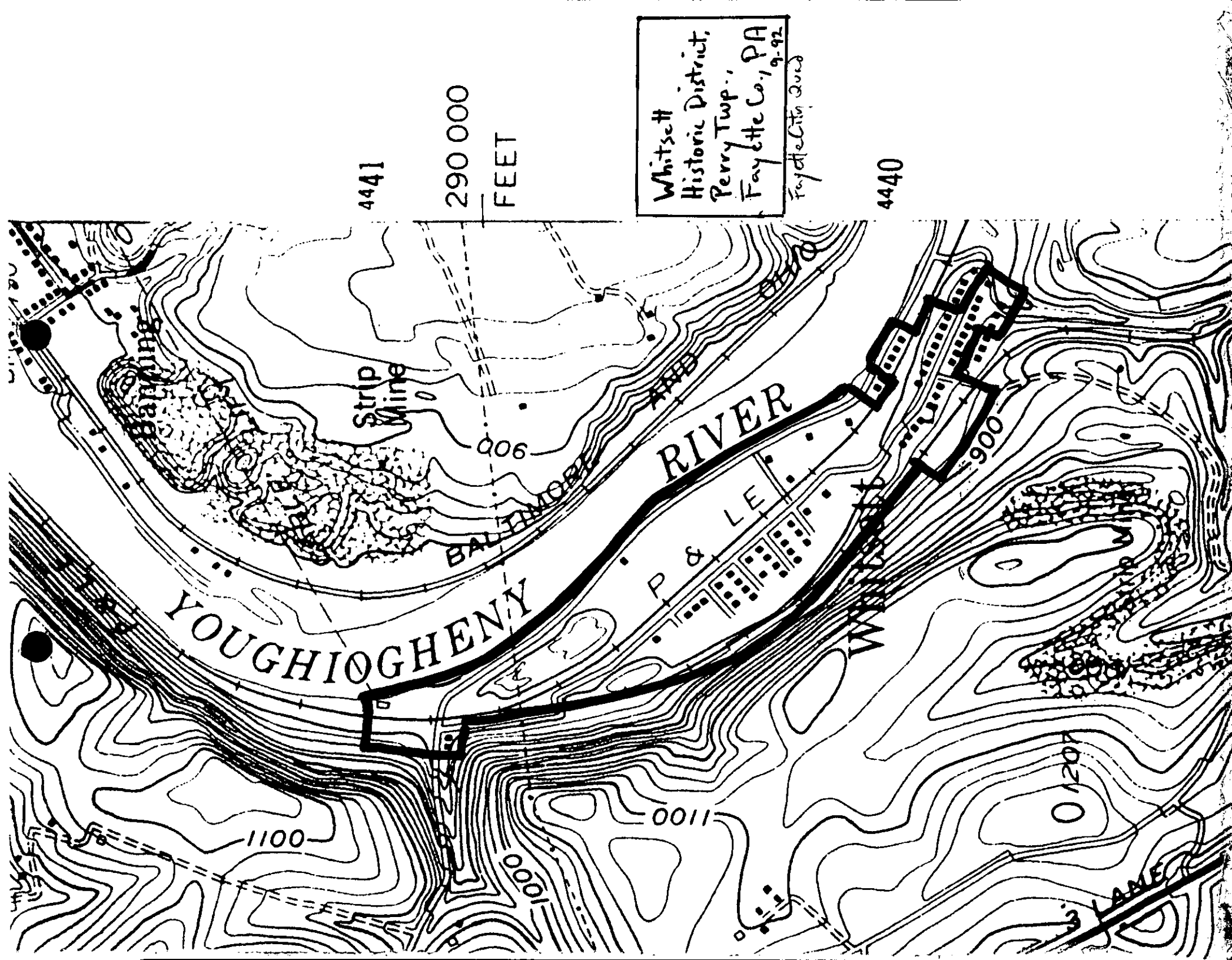


Whitsett Historic District

Fayette Co., PA
1/95

KEY

-  District Boundary
-  Contributing Resource
-  Noncontributing Resource
-  Photo No. & View Direction



4441

290 000

FEET

Whitsett
Historic District,
Perry Twp.,
Fayette Co., PA
15785

4440

Strip
Mine

006

BALTIMORE

RIVER

P & LE

900

YOUGHIOGHENY

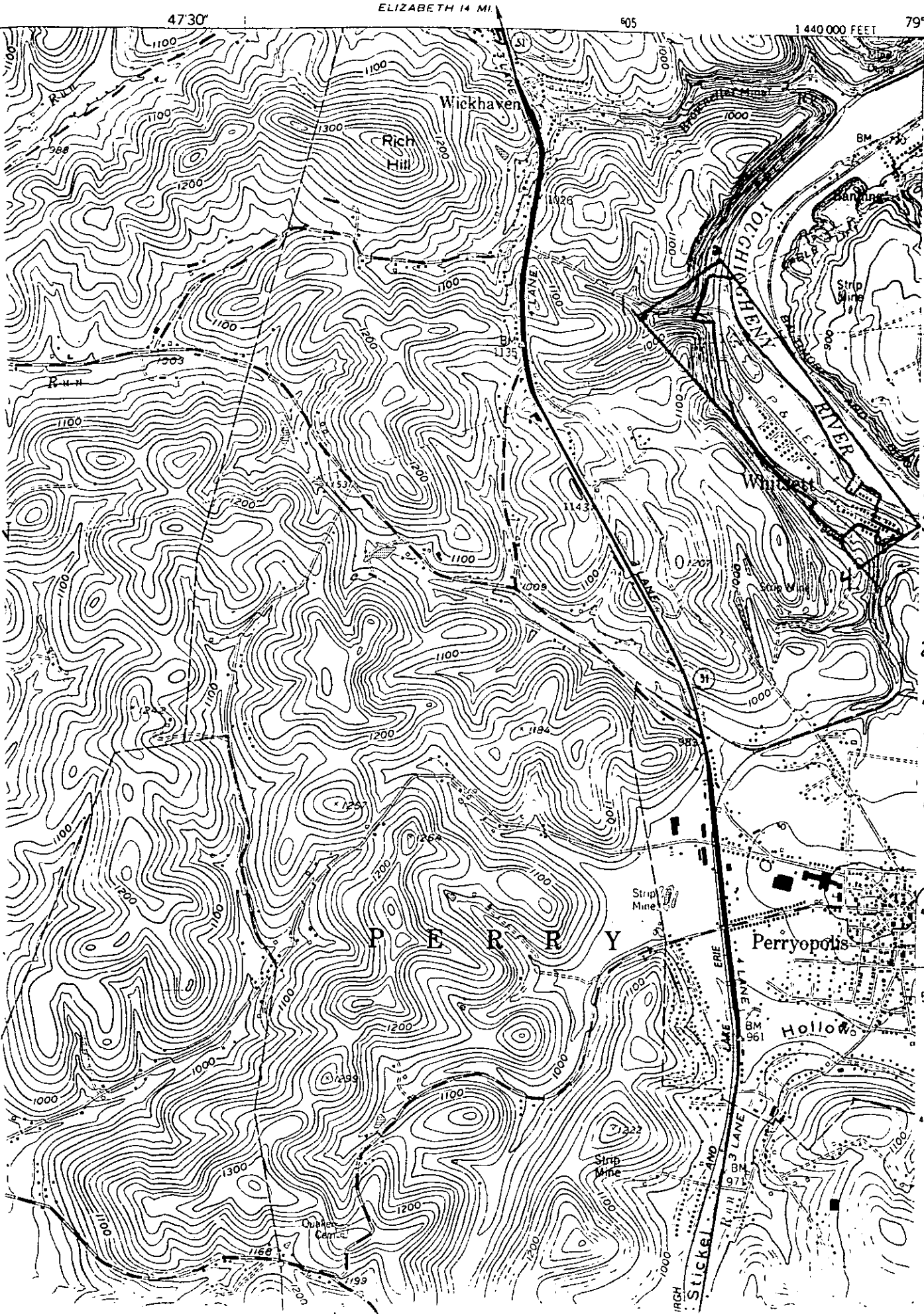
1100

1000

0011

01204

L. A. M. E. R.



4730'

ELIZABETH 14 MI.

905

1 440 000 FEET

79°45'

40°07'30"

442

441

440

439

438

437

290 000
FEET

Whitfield Co. PA
Fayette Co. PA
ZONE
17

UTMs:
1605160
4440760
2605520
4441040
3606540
4439800
4602220
4439520

Bituminous
Coal & Coke
Reservoir
PA, 175 -
1944
MADE, 1934