

Today we reminisce as we travel to the small village of Ironton, located in the midst of the iron ore district, took its name from this mineral which was discovered around 1800 and was mined from until the early 1900's. The village grew quickly as the iron workers needed housing. Iron ore quarries surrounded the village and the oldest road in the Township passes through it, which was Mauch Chunk Road.

Adam Scheurer was the original owner of the land upon which Ironton stands. It was licensed as a hotel in 1858, and



was kept for some time by Abraham Lucas. In 1859, Tinsley Jeter divided the land into building lots which were bought immediately by the iron workers. It has been said that Ironton was formed in a year's

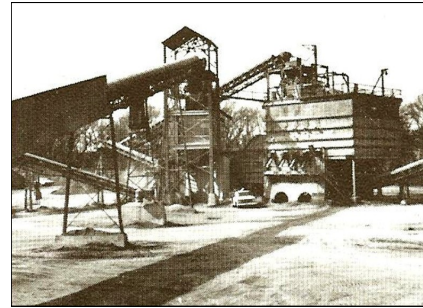
time.

In 1860, Horace Balliet erected a brick hotel and store building which later also became the post office. He also dealt in coal, flour, and feed.

These mines form one excavation at the northern end of the village of Ironton. They formed the largest mine hole in Lehigh County and more ore was taken from this excavation than from any other mine.



Iron ore lay in lumps upon the surface, some of which were large boulders weighing several tons, and was found in such profusion that its presence was a serious impediment to the prosecution of agriculture. Some of this surface ore when first found was taken to the Richard and Regent Furnace at Hamburg and exchanged for pig-iron. Some was turned into nails by hand at the forge of Adam Scheurer and some was loaded upon four-horse teams and sold at twenty-five or fifty cents a load. Ore was also taken to Mauch Chunk with horse teams and exchanged for equal weight of coal.

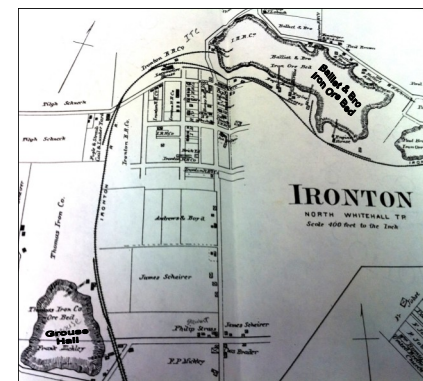


In 1860, the Coplay Ironton Railroad was built, extending from Coplay on the Lehigh Valley Railroad through Whitehall Township to Ironton in North Whitehall. It was

constructed to carry the iron ore mined in the Ironton area to the furnaces along the Lehigh River. It was built by Tinsley Jeter and, finally, became the property of the Thomas Iron Company. In 1861, the Siegersville Branch of the Ironton railroad, a 3 mile stretch, was built to



Orefield to transport the iron ore mined there to the Coplay region. Later, when the cement industry expanded in the Ormrod region along the railroad, it was also used to transport cement, limestone, and coal. For years, this railroad was the most profitable of any railroad in the world in proportion to length and investment. The Ironton Railroad is heavily endowed with remains of historical structures.



Huge blast furnaces operated in the area and required massive amounts of coal, iron ore, and limestone. After mining days were over in this area, the Railroad was used less and less until, finally, it was abandoned.

TODAY, a portion of the railbed is in use or under development as the **Ironton Rail Trail System**.



The Ironton Elementary School was erected in 1923. This school started as a six-room building!

Next issue of *"What's Goin' On"*, we will travel to another small village, **Balliettsville**. Do you have any history of Balliettsville, if you do, please email me: duherick@northwhitehall.org