

# Switching Leetonia Area Iron Works

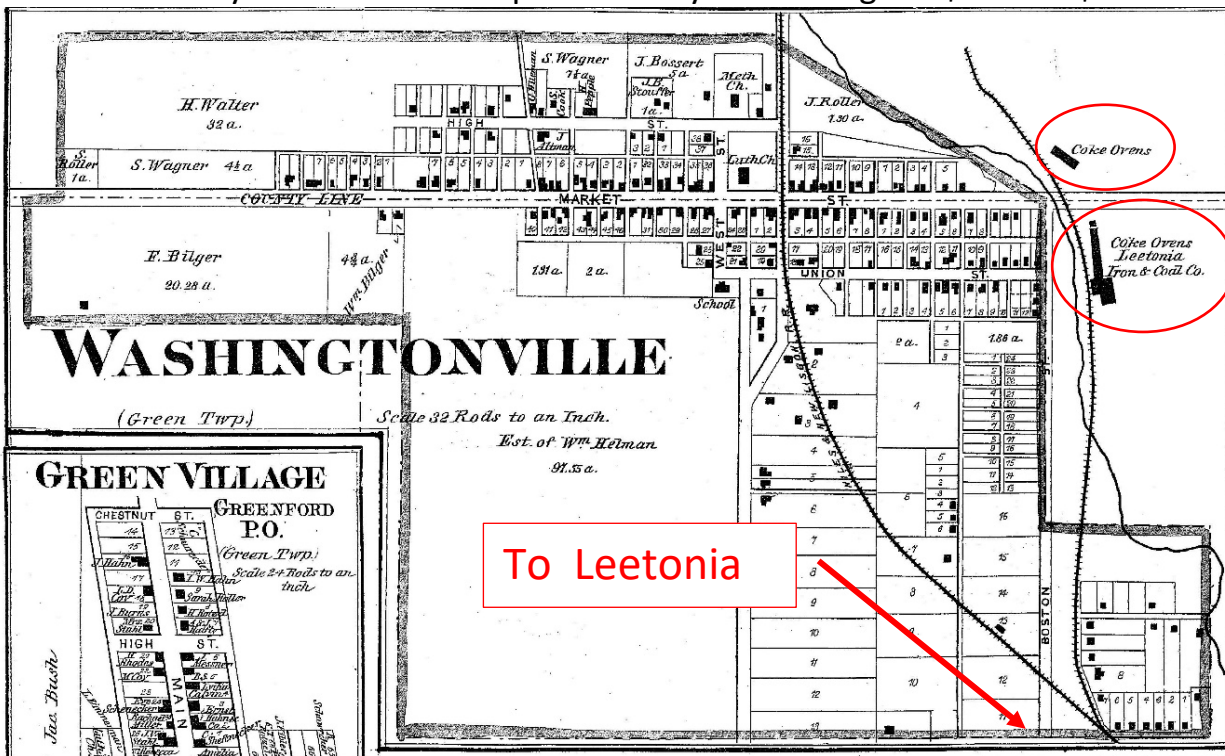
Pre 1890

We know only bits and pieces about how railcars were switched at the Leetonia Iron & Coal Co. and the Grafton Iron Co. and their successor companies before 1890.

From the DiRocco PhD dissertation "In the Shadow of Steel" we know Jacob G. Chamberlain served in the 1850's as Chief Engineer on the proposed Ashtabula & New Lisbon Rail Road Co. In that assignment he became familiar with the rich coal and iron deposits in the Washingtonville area. In the early 1860's Chamberlain operated a horse-drawn tram railway to haul coal and iron ore from Washingtonville southward about 1 ½ miles to the Leetonia area. There the tonnage was transloaded into Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago Railroad cars for shipment to iron works in the region.

Later, Chamberlain would become Supt. of the New Lisbon Railway when that company was incorporated in 1864, and in 1866 Chamberlain was one of the principals in the formation of the Leetonia Iron & Coal Company.

The New Lisbon Railway Co. began operations between New Lisbon and the Leetonia area in September 1865. With the beginning of iron production at the Leetonia Iron & Coal Co. in the spring of 1867, Chamberlain's New Lisbon Railway began directly switching his Leetonia Iron & Coal properties. How do we know? The New Lisbon Rwy. section of the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Railroads and Telegraphs of Ohio for the year ending June 30, 1868, shows New Lisbon Rwy. earned freight revenues of \$8097 for moving 29,793 tons of freight--most local freight moved 1 ½ miles. This likely consisted of coal, ore and coke hauled from LI&C mines and coke ovens east of Washingtonville (see 1874 Mahoning County Atlas map of Washingtonville) to the main blast furnace and oven complex at Leetonia. Assuming 10-12 tons per car of coal and ore, revenue and rate information in that 1868 report suggest the New Lisbon Rwy. earned revenue per car likely in the range of \$2.50 to \$3.50.

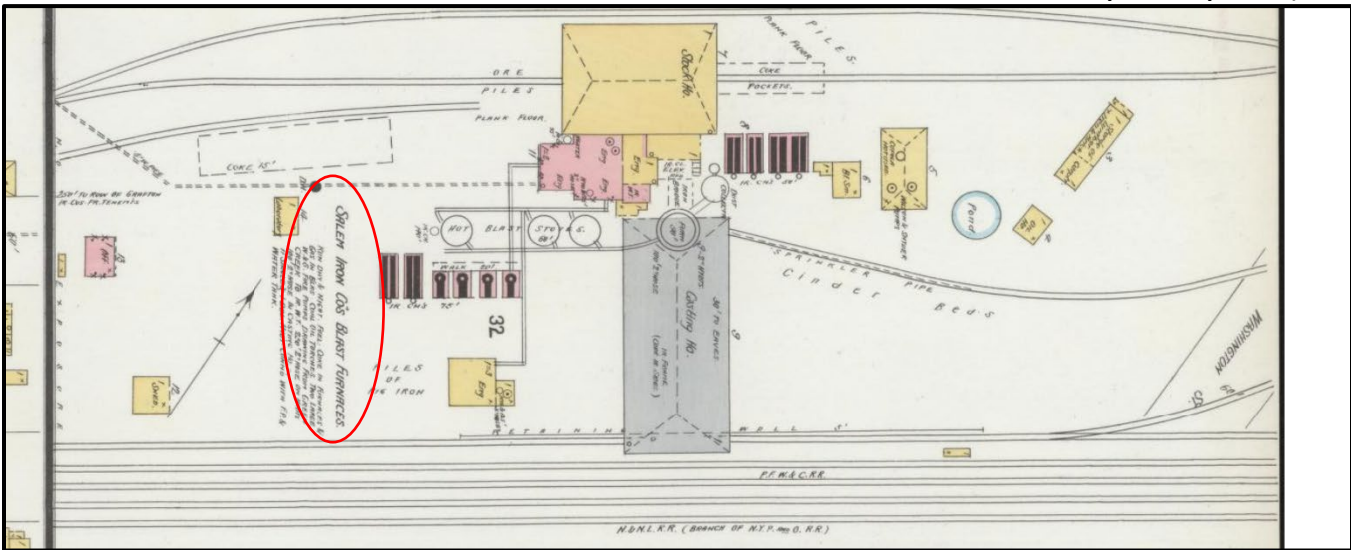


The Grafton Iron Company, located on the west edge of Leetonia along the north side of the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago Railroad, ignited its first blast furnace in October 1867. An 1872 Birds Eye map of the area shows Grafton's primary coal and ore mine, coke ovens and blast furnace were near each other, suggesting there was little or no railcar switching in moving tonnage between these locations. But the map depicts a track from the PFTW&C line to the blast furnace area. So it's likely the PFTW&C provided switching at the site for pig iron, slag and other byproducts of the iron-making process.

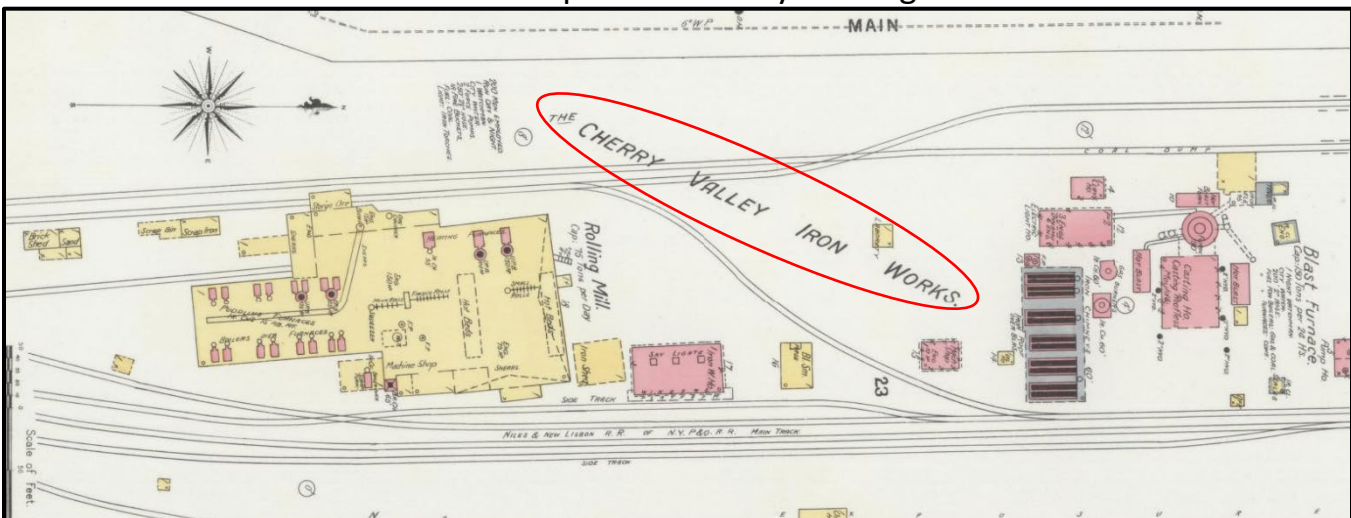
### Around the 1890's

Information on switching operations at Leetonia iron-making sites around the turn of the century is also sketchy. But there are three primary sources available that provide some good information: Wayne Cole's book *Ghost Rails 1850-1980 Vol. 1*, pages 62-65; the Report of the Railroad Commission of Ohio for the Year Ending June 30, 1911; and various newsclips in the Leetonia Reporter newspaper (available through Leetonia Public Library website).

As both iron works grew and expanded through the late 1800's, and as the volume of inbound coal, ore and limestone and outbound coke and iron products grew, the railroad yard tracks and sidings serving these two industries also expanded (see maps below; by 1898 Grafton had become Salem Iron; Leetonia Coal & Iron had become Cherry Valley Iron).



Both June 1898 Sanborn maps from Library of Congress website



During the 1890's, at the Salem Iron Co. site, the PFTW&C (part of the Pennsylvania Company) continued to provide switching service on the expanding system of tracks within the iron-making complex (spotting inbound coke, ore and limestone and pulling iron, ash, cinders and slag from the blast furnace area) and on the adjacent PRR yard tracks (sorting inbound and outbound traffic to the Salem Iron complex). We know this from multiple Leetonia Reporter articles which refer to the PRR "shifter" working this area:

Engine No. 687, which shifts the cinder pot at the Grafton furnace, was derailed Wednesday afternoon by the spreading of the rails. After an hours patient toil the locomotive was got out of the difficulty. Beyond the delay and the expenditure of some surplus energy no injury resulted from the mishap.

Leetonia Reporter 7-14-1899

The Pennsylvania shifting engine No. 85, which has been operating at the Grafton furnace, was sent to the Allegheny shops for repairs yesterday morning, and engine No. 12 was put in its place.

Leetonia Reporter 5-12-1899

From dozens of articles in the Reporter over the years, we know the newspaper used the term "shifter" to refer to engines and crews of either the PRR or N&NL (Erie) which provided switching service to local industries or sorted railcars in Leetonia area PRR or Erie yards. But we also see the newspaper used the term "dinky" (also sometimes spelled "dinkey" or "dinkie") for a very small locomotive, apparently owned by the industry (not PRR or Erie), to position single or short strings of cars within that industry. At Salem Iron we see:

**Bruised.**

John Bruder, a brakeman on the dinkey engine at the Grafton furnace, got pretty badly bruised while in the performance of his duties last Friday forenoon.

He was attempting to couple a car when he was caught between the side of the wharf and the car head, with the result that he received a severe though not serious bruise.

He went home immediately and sent for Dr. H. B. Kurtz, who went and dressed the wounded parts.

Mr. Bruder will be idle for a few days nursing his bruises.

Leetonia Reporter 10-14 1898

**Derailed.**

The Pennsylvania Company's shifter operating at the Grafton furnace, jumped the track a few yards east of the station, Tuesday evening about 5:30.

The accident resulted from the defective working of a switch. The locomotive was being run in on a siding and the switch failing to work properly the engine jumped the rails and ran along the ties for about fifty yards.

Beyond the delay in waiting three

Leetonia Reporter 2-3-1899

Emil Stump, who has been assistant engineer at the Grafton furnace, is back again on the Dinkey engine, and his continual tooting would remind one of the awful danger signal sounded by the steamers going through the fogs near New Foundland.

Leetonia Reporter 12-16-1898

Homer McIlvain, who held the position of labor boss at the Grafton furnace since the tragic death of Patrick Halloran, has resigned and resumed his duties on the Dinkie engine at that plant.

Leetonia Reporter 7-21-1899

So we know in the 1890's Salem Iron was switched by both the Pennsylvania "shifter" and Salem's own in-plant switching "dinky".

We also know that by the 1890's the Niles & New Lisbon (Erie) had access to Salem Iron Company industry trackage, as well. We know this for several reasons: 1) The 1918 Erie RR valuation map depicts all the trackage within that complex with a note "Tracks to the McKeefrey Iron Company [formerly Salem Iron] are used by the Erie Railroad." 2) Period maps show a N&NL connecting track diverting from the N&NL mainline near Walnut Street (east of Salem Iron) and leading westward into the iron works area. 3) Two Leetonia Reporter articles cite Erie Railroad operations in the Salem Iron area:

Engine No. 126 of the Erie railroad got stalled near the Washington street crossing of the Front street railroad Monday morning. The engineer put on the air-brakes, which held the wheels as in a vice. When he was going to start again he tried to take off the brakes but could not move them. They were out of order, needing the attention of an expert machinist.

Leetonia Reporter 12-10-1899

**A Wreck on the Erie.**  
Two loaded freight cars were derailed on the Erie railroad last Saturday afternoon. The yard engine of the Erie company was shoving some cars on to the switch about one hundred yards west of the Walnut street crossing when a broken rail gave way, causing two cars, a flat and a box car, to keel over. The flat was loaded with pig iron belonging to the Salem Iron Company; the box car contained rod iron from the Cherry Valley rolling mill. Monday forenoon the wreck train of the Erie company arrived at the scene of the disaster, and after a few hours patient and intelligent toil cleared the switch of the incumbrance.

Leetonia Reporter 4-14-1899

Note: The Washington Street Crossing along Front Street cited in the 12-10-1899 article is at the eastern edge of the Salem Iron complex, indicating Erie access to the complex. So as early as the 1890's, it appears the PFTW&C and the N&NL each switched their own traffic within the Salem Iron complex (making it a "jointly served industry" in today's railroad lexicon).

At the Cherry Valley Iron Works, during this same period around the turn of the century, the Niles & New Lisbon (NYP&O, Erie) continued to serve the Cherry Valley complex, just as its predecessor, the New Lisbon Rwy., had begun doing in the late 1860's. Service included moving loads and empties between Cherry Valley-owned mines at Washingtonville and the CV blast furnace and coke oven complex on the east side of Leetonia, as well as the spotting and pulling of railcars within that complex (such as moving coal, ore, and limestone up the hill onto the high line beside the blast furnace, spotting coal and pulling coke at the coke ovens, weighing cars at the track scale, and pulling finished iron products from the rolling mill at the south end of the complex). We know this from several very informative newsclips about the Erie "shifter" which appeared in the Leetonia Reporter during this period:

### Three Cars Wrecked.

Last Friday morning about one o'clock the shifter on the N. Y., P. & O. railroad set a car of cinder up in the ware-house at the Cherry Valley furnace. It left the car standing at the top of the hill and while shifting some cars on the middle track, the car loaded with cinder started down the hill and crashed into the train, wrecking three cars. The cinder car was a total wreck. The wreck train arrived about 2 o'clock and before many hours had passed, the wreck was cleared up. It is supposed that the brake on the car were not properly set.

Leetonia Reporter 2-1-1895

### Smashup at the Furnace.

What might have been a fatal accident happened at the Cherry Valley furnace on Thursday afternoon. The shifter was taking a load of coke up, and had run upon the trestle work. The trestle work, which has been bad for a long while, broke and the weight of the cars turned the rail, throwing four cars into the pit, completely demolishing them besides damaging two others. It was thought at first that brakeman Wilhelm was buried under the debris, but he was found safe and sound, he having got off at the rolling mill. No person was working under

Leetonia Reporter 11-2-1894

### A WRECK

On the Erie Railroad Saturday Morning.

At 10:30 Saturday morning, the shifter of the Erie Company employed at this place, took 15 empties from the Cherry Valley furnace and was pushing them towards the Cherry Valley mines at Washingtonville and had reached to the curve about midway between here and Washingtonville, when along came an extra coal train heading for the south and before there was time to prevent it a collision resulted.

The headlight of the coal train engine was smashed and the engine itself much wrecked, together with being derailed. Two of the empties that the shifter was shoving were made subjects of extensive repairs, but the shifter was uninjured owing no doubt to the fact that there were 15 cars between it and the central point of concussion.

The wreck caused the Erie passenger train from the north to be delayed something over an hour.

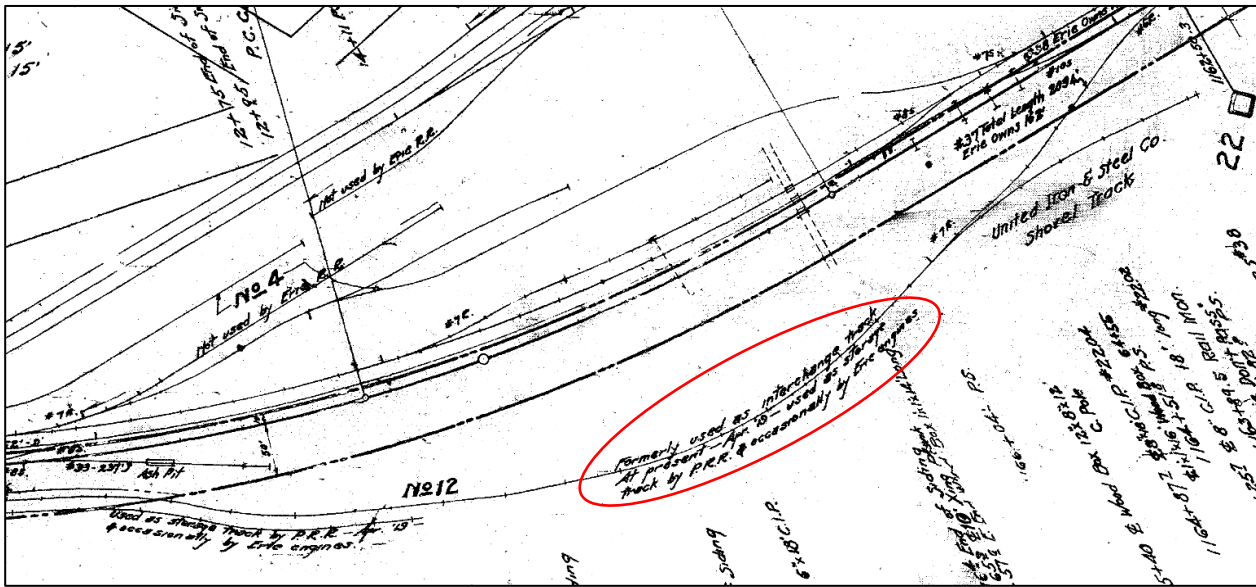
Leetonia Reporter 9-3-1898

Engine No. 1113 of the Erie railroad was derailed Tuesday forenoon while hauling empties down the incline of the Cherry Valley Company. The delay in getting the locomotive in position was the only item of loss occasioned by the accident.

Leetonia Reporter 12-1-1899

(#1113 was likely an Erie H Class 2-8-0)

Unlike operations at the Salem Iron site, based on Erie RR 1918 Val maps and newsclips like those above, it appears N&NL accessed virtually all the Cherry Valley site, while PFTW&C accessed only limited trackage at the site. (A review of hundreds of newsclips involving Cherry Valley produced no references to a Pennsylvania shifter working the Cherry Valley site during this period.) Thus shipments to (or from) the Cherry Valley site routed via PFTW&C to (or from) Leetonia would have been delivered at Leetonia from PFTW&C to N&NL (or reverse). Transfer of such shipments from one railroad to the other would have taken place on a specific track designated for interchange. (Note "interchange track" on 1918 Erie RR Valuation map of an area south of the former Cherry Valley complex, between the Erie and PRR mainlines.)



For such a shipment (for example, let's say a load of machinery from Alliance to Leetonia), PFTW&C would have received linehaul revenue (let's say, \$30), and then from that revenue paid (or absorbed) the N&NL switching charge (say, \$4) for moving the car from the interchange track to the unloading spot within the Cherry Valley complex. Such a revenue settlement arrangement was referred to as Absorbed Switching. Absorbed Switching arrangements had become common by the turn of the century (and remain common practice in the railroad industry today).

A review of hundreds of newsclips from the late 1800's which mention Cherry Valley revealed no references to a "dinky" operation there. Coupling this fact with access by the Erie shifter to trackage throughout the complex, it appears unlikely CV operated its own small locomotive in the complex to move railcars. But we do find two interesting references in the Leetonia newspaper in the 1890's to different forms of power used to move product around the site—horses and mules:

**Frisky Horses.**  
 The Cherry Valley Company's cart horses felt their oats Tuesday morning. When they were being hitched up for their daily toil Grey Bill was evidently seized by the determination to make a break for liberty, and to that end ran away from the driver before the hitching process was completed. On his line of rapid transit he struck against Grey Fred, breaking the latter's leg so badly that he will probably have to be shot. Bill never stopped until he ran against a post in the company's field. The sorrel horse, as if frightened or learning from the bad example of

Leetonia Reporter 3-11-1898

learning from the bad example of kicking Bill, broke away also from the driver when about half hitched and ran like fury down the road in the direction of the shop near the coke ovens. The half hitching, however, was the means of putting a halt to the sorrel's gallop, for he had not proceeded very far when the shafts left their places and fell to the ground and ran to two feet of their length into a clay bank. The aid of the horses used at the coke ovens was required to pull the sorrel and its cart out of the mud. With the exception of Fred's misfortune the injuries resulting from the accident are trifling.

**A Mule Shot.**  
 The Cherry Valley Company's mule which has been employed pulling freight cars at the blast furnace has gone to the happy hunting ground. Tuesday afternoon it pulled a car loaded with pig iron, to the railroad scales at the plant for the purpose of adjusting the contents of the car to stated requirements, the animal remaining hitched pending the adjustment. By this time the north-bound Erie freight train approached, and the mule becoming frightened by it broke away from John Wren, the driver, and ran towards the train. The engine hit the poor animal and so badly disabled it that to end its sufferings Mr. Halverstadt shot it.

Leetonia Reporter 6-9-1899

It appears horses were used at the coke ovens to move small wagons and carts (not surprising since coke weighed only 60-70% as much as coal). But the 6-9-1899 article is interesting in

that a mule was used to pull an entire freight car loaded with heavy pig iron.

### After About 1900

With the early 1900's, switching operations at the two iron-making industries at Leetonia changed. In both cases, switching operations by the Pennsylvania and Erie "shiffters" within the iron-making complexes were discontinued and replaced by each iron company's own in-plant railroad.

In 1904 we find these two articles in the Leetonia Reporter. The first shows the Erie Railroad was still switching the Cherry Valley location late that year. But the second reports the incorporation of a new company, the Cherry Valley Railroad, which appears to have been organized with the intention to take over at least some of the Erie's service to the CV iron and mining operations in the Leetonia and Washingtonville areas.

#### **Off the Track.**

The new switching engine in the Erie yards, on its first trip up the Cherry Valley hill switch, Sunday evening, left the track at the derail and plunged down into the ditch. Fortunately the machine did not topple over and the engineer and fireman both escaped without any injury. The Youngstown wreck crew was sent for, and after working hard all night they succeeded in placing the engine squarely on the rails and making it fit for business.

The boys about the station are not a bit superstitious, but then they all recall that every new crew who started here on a Sunday had bad luck of some kind.

Leetonia Reporter 12-2-1904

The Cherry Valley Railroad company, of Leetonia, has been incorporated with \$100,000 capital stock by E. M. Peters, H. C. Forsythe, A. J. Sevenich, M. A. Taylor and W. C. Lodge. The company is authorized to construct a line from a point near the plant of the Cherry Valley Iron company in Leetonia to the company's mines at Washingtonville and back again to the starting point.

Leetonia Reporter 11-25-1904

It's doubtful this Cherry Valley Railroad Company ever began actual operations. At least three of the five incorporators were CV employees (a chemist, assistant superintendent and stenographer) and one (Sevenich) a banker who also served as village treasurer. So there appears to have been a serious proposal (note proposed stock value of \$100,000). But there are no subsequent references to that company in the Leetonia newspaper or in the Ohio Railroad Commission Reports for the years 1906-1911.

The first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a period of change at Cherry Valley. In 1900 Cherry Valley operations began contracting with the closure of the CV Rolling Mill and the scaling back of its mining operations in Washingtonville. In 1900 the Cherry Valley Iron Co. was sold to the Cherry Valley Iron Co. of Pittsburgh, and in 1907 that company was acquired by United Iron & Steel Company. In 1910 United was purchased by the M. A. Hanna Company of Cleveland.

At some date during or prior to 1910, switching of the former Cherry Valley site was taken over by a new company, the Leetonia & Cherry Valley Railroad Company. The Report of the Railroad Commission of Ohio for the Year Ending June 30, 1911, p. 319, states the L&CV RR

was "operated or controlled by United Iron & Steel Co." With assumption of switching at the former Cherry Valley location by Leetonia & Cherry Valley RR, switching throughout the complex by Erie was likely discontinued.

At the Salem Iron Co. site, switching practices were also changing. Salem Iron was owned by the McKeefrey family. A 1906 article in the Leetonia Reporter lists the offices held by John C. McKeefrey, President of Salem Iron. Included in that list is President of the Leetonia Railway. We find a second reference to the Leetonia Railway Company on page 276 of that Report of the Railroad Commission of Ohio for the Year ending June 30, 1911. Note control of the railway by three McKeefrey family members (John and his two sons):

**Like most broad minded men of means, Mr. McKeefrey is identified with many interests of a commercial and financial character, requiring vast sums of money to finance and operate and most of them employ a large number of skilled and unskilled labor; in all of which Mr. McKeefrey is an active participant in each, as the following summary will disclose:**  
**President Salem Iron company; president Leetonia Railway company; president Leetonia Coal company; president Atlas Coke company; president McKeefrey Coal company; president Shenango Limestone company; senior partner McKeefrey & Company, Leetonia, Ohio; director First National Bank, Leetonia, Ohio; stockholder Farmers' Deposit National Bank, Pittsburg, Pa.; stockholder National Bank of Western, Pa., Pittsburg. Pa.; stockholder Bank of Pittsburg, Pittsburg, Pa.**

**THE LEETONIA RAILWAY COMPANY.**  
(Incorporated under laws of Ohio.)

**DIRECTORS.**

| Names.                | P. O. Address.       | Expiration of Term. |
|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| John McKeefrey .....  | Leetonia, Ohio ..... | July, 1911.         |
| C. R. Shontz .....    | Leetonia, Ohio ..... | July, 1911.         |
| W. D. McKeefrey ..... | Leetonia, Ohio ..... | July, 1911.         |
| W. W. Williams .....  | Leetonia, Ohio ..... | July, 1911.         |
| N. J. McKeefrey ..... | Leetonia, Ohio ..... | July, 1911.         |

**OFFICERS.**

| Title.                        | Names.                           | Location of Office. |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| President .....               | John McKeefrey .....             | Leetonia, Ohio.     |
| Vice-President .....          | W. D. McKeefrey .....            | Leetonia, Ohio.     |
| Secretary and Treasurer ..... | N. J. McKeefrey .....            | Leetonia, Ohio.     |
| Attorneys .....               | Billingsley, Clark & Moore ..... | Lisbon, Ohio.       |
| General Manager .....         | W. D. McKeefrey .....            | Leetonia, Ohio.     |
| Superintendent .....          | Hugh Smith .....                 | Leetonia, Ohio.     |
| Traffic Manager .....         | N. J. McKeefrey .....            | Leetonia, Ohio.     |

General Offices—Leetonia, Ohio.

Leetonia Reporter 4-20-1906 Report of Railroad Commission of Ohio, Yr Ending 6-30-1911

It's not clear from the information available if this Leetonia Railway Company of the early 1900's is a completely new company responsible for switching Salem Iron, or a continuation of the same operation of the in-plant "dinky" which we saw in the 1890's. While the note below in a 1901 edition of the Reporter suggests the name "Leetonia railroad" might actually have applied to the earlier dinky operation, we don't know for sure.

on the McKeefrey farm.  
 The Leetonia railroad company has added four new gondola cars to its rolling stock.

Leetonia Reporter 6-7-1901

Under either scenario, the following detailed data suggests that by 1910 the Leetonia Railway wasn't just a "dinky" operation, but had become the primary switching carrier at Salem Iron.



This data about these two switching railroads for the year ending June 30, 1911, was compiled from various tables in that Ohio Railroad Commission Report (pages 316-426):

|                                   | <u>Leetonia Rwy</u> | <u>Leetonia &amp; C V RR</u> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Miles of Mainline & Branches      | 4.00                | 1.60                         |
| Miles Operated under Lease        | 4.00                | 4.24                         |
| Total Miles Operated              | 4.00                | 5.84                         |
| Capital Stock                     |                     |                              |
| Shares Authorized                 | 200 (Common)        | 100 (Common)                 |
| Par Value 1 Share                 | \$50                | \$100                        |
|                                   |                     | (note, \$10,000 value)       |
| Investment to June 30, 1907       |                     |                              |
| Equipment                         | \$ 5962.68          | \$ 0                         |
| Total Invstmt, Road and Equip.    | 11,561              | 44,016                       |
| Operating Income                  |                     |                              |
| Operating Revenues (Switching)    | 9462.68             | 24,026.56                    |
| Operating Expense                 | 9368.14             | 22,773.66                    |
| Net Operating Income              | 94.54               | 1252.84                      |
| Other Expenses                    |                     |                              |
| Maintenance of Way                | \$ 0                | \$ 3231.81                   |
| Mtce of Equipment                 | 3910.29             | 4959.44                      |
| Net Corporate Income/ <b>Loss</b> | \$1696.69 Income    | <b>\$8315.03 (Loss)</b>      |
| Number of Locomotives             | 1                   | 2                            |
| Cars in Freight Service           |                     |                              |
| Flat Car                          | 18                  | 12                           |
| Coal                              | 0                   | 40                           |
| Total                             | 18 (Owned)          | 52 (Leased)                  |
| Assets                            | \$9,014.06          | \$42,602.49                  |

|                          | <u>Leetonia Rwy</u> | <u>Leetonia &amp; C V RR</u> |
|--------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Number of Employees      |                     |                              |
| General Office           | 1                   | 3                            |
| Enginmen                 | 1                   | 2                            |
| Firemen                  | 1                   | 2                            |
| Conductors               | 1                   | 2                            |
| Other Trainmen           | 1                   | 2                            |
| Section Foremen          | 0                   | 1                            |
| Other Trackmen           | 0                   | 6                            |
| All Other                | <u>1</u>            | <u>3</u>                     |
| Total Employees          | 6                   | 21                           |
| <br>Total Employee Wages | <br>\$3795.92       | <br>\$14,680.86              |

Comments and observations based on the above information:

--The 4 miles of trackage operated by the Leetonia Rwy under lease was apparently owned and maintained by Salem Iron. The Leetonia & Cherry Valley trackage was a combination of trackage owned outright by L&CV or leased from its parent United Iron & Steel. Unlike the Leetonia Railway, L&CV was responsible for maintaining its 5.84 miles of trackage (note MofW expense and 1 Section Foreman and 6 Trackmen on L&CV payroll).

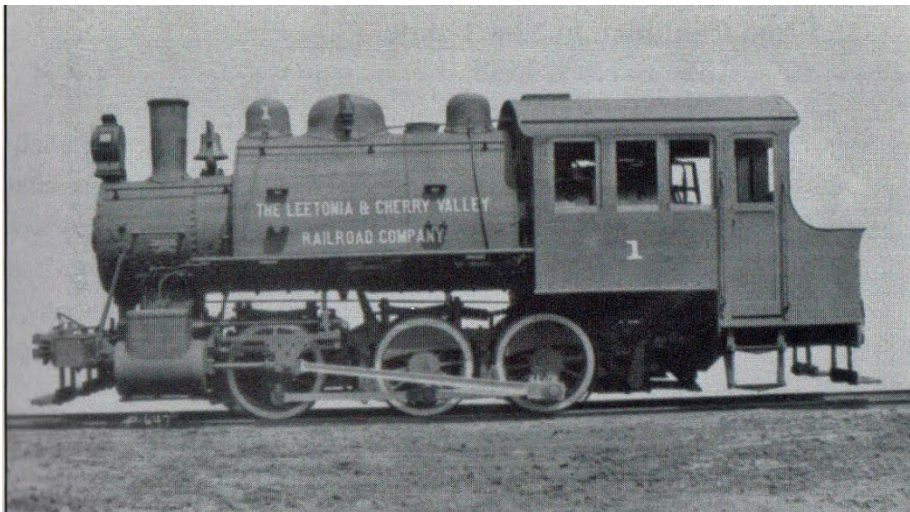
--Based on the relative size of Switching Revenues, the number of locomotives, and the number of trainmen and enginemen on each carrier, the L&CV likely switched about twice the number of carloads as the Leetonia Railway in 1911. Why the difference? Salem Iron traffic consisted of inbound raw materials (coke, ore and limestone) and outbound iron and iron-making biproducts (such as slag and ash). But at United Iron & Steel, in addition to generating those same inbound and outbound commodities, United operated about 200 coke ovens, selling the coke on the open market to other iron manufacturers in the region (see article below from July 26, 1912 Mahoning Dispatch).

**—Coke making is said to have become a leading industry in Leetonia. Train loads of coal hauled over the Niles & Lisbon railroad are converted into coke which is shipped to all big iron manufacturing centers.**

--It's probable these switching railroads earned revenue by assessing a switching charge (in the same manner as the absorbed switching arrangement described above) against the linehaul carrier that participated in the movement of the carload to or from Leetonia. At Salem Iron, the Leetonia Railway connected with linehaul carriers PRR and Erie; at United Iron & Steel, the

Leetonia & Cherry Valley Railroad connected with PRR, Erie and—beginning about 1907—the Youngstown & Ohio River Railroad (Y&OR connection north of complex, near Standard Slag). ---Since it appears each switch carrier was operated as its own profit center, it's likely each railroad also charged its respective iron company for intraplant switching moves, such as for moving a carload of coke from the coke ovens to the highline (where coke was positioned for dumping at the base of the skip hoist).

From DiRocco, "In the Shadow of Steel," and Cole we know in 1910 with the M. A. Hanna Company of Cleveland purchase of United Iron & Steel, Hanna acquired two locomotives for the Leetonia & Cherry Valley Railroad operation. Locomotives #1 and #2 from Alco Locomotive Works in Pittsburgh each weighed 54 tons, had 44-inch driving wheels and an unusual bin at the rear of the cab for coal supply (Vollhardt photo, information from Steamlocomotive.com, Cole Ghost Rails Vol. 1, p.65). This is presumably one of the two L&CV locomotives referenced in the 1911 Report.



These locomotives were delivered to Leetonia in early August 1910.

**The Leetonia and Cherry Valley Railroad company have recently received two brand new and up-to-date engines for their private use and which attracted much attention when first seen on the siding near the freight house.**

Mr. Elizabeth Wright who has been  
Leetonia Reporter 8-5-1910

### After About 1910

After 1911, Annual Reports of the Ohio Railroad Commission were replaced by Annual Reports of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) to the Governor of the State of Ohio. The Leetonia Railway and the Leetonia & Cherry Valley Railroad were each listed in the 1912 and the 1913 PUCO reports. But, while the L&CV reported over \$30,000 switching revenue each of those years, the Leetonia Rwy reported no revenues in either year. Why?

In early 1913 Salem Iron announced plans to mortgage a large share of its assets and rebuild the iron works into a steel mill. However, later that year a Pittsburgh bank on which Salem Iron was relying for funding failed. That failure forced Salem Iron to file for bankruptcy, and the company remained idle until 1915 when the McKeefrey family succeeded in regaining control of the property. In the fall of that year, it appears the Leetonia Railway was dissolved.

**Notice for Stockholders' Meeting.**

Leetonia, Ohio, Oct. 15, 1915.

A meeting of the Stockholders of The Leetonia Railway Co. will be held at the office of the company, Grafton Supply Co. Building, Leetonia, Ohio, on the 18th day of November, 1915, at 10:00 o'clock, A. M., for the purpose of considering and acting upon the proposed dissolution of said corporation, and of the surrender and abandonment of its corporate authority and franchises and the transaction of any and all business necessary or incident thereto.  
John C. Kearney, Secretary.

Leetonia Reporter 10-15-1915

Dissolution of the Leetonia Railway Co. seems confirmed by the absence of any mention of that company in the Leetonia Reporter after 1915.

Similarly, after 1913 no listings for Leetonia & Cherry Valley Railroad appear in the annual PUCO reports (checked 1915, 1918, 1919, 1922 and 1926). Since M. A. Hanna continued iron production at the Cherry Valley site during these years, I believe this absence in the reports was merely due to a change in which railroads were included in the PUCO reports--not the end of that switching railroad. (Only the 1912 and 1913 PUCO reports include information on any switching railroads in the "Steam Railroads" section of the report.) Cole speculates the L&CV would have continued to operate during much of this period, perhaps even taking over the switching work at the Salem Iron site once that company resumed iron production after 1915.

After 1920

The aftermath of World War I and the 1920's were difficult times for Leetonia's iron industries. Increasingly, Leetonia's small iron producers were competing against larger, intergrated steel companies in the region. At the same time, production was often halted during long economic slowdowns, for labor issues at area coal mines (cutting off coal supply), and for maintenance or upgrades to the aging iron-making infrastructure. For example:

**OLD McKEEFREY  
FURNACE ACTIVE**

**AFTER TWO YEARS IDLENESS  
THE PLANT IS BEING PUT  
IN COMMISSION**

Great activity is in evidence this week in and about the old McKeefrey furnace at the West End of town, and inquiry at the office received the definite announcement that the plant was being prepared for operations and was expected to be in full commission in four to six weeks. All old employees are being called in to take their former positions.

Leetonia Reporter 3-2-1923

**ALL COAL MINES  
ARE OPERATING**

**UNITED MINE AND DELMORE  
ARE ON IN FULL AND SHIP-  
PING CAR LOADS**

**RESUMING ALL AROUND**

Majority of Mines in Columbiana County Opened and Rushing Work to Set Miners at Digging

With the settlement of the coal strike last week, activity started around all the mines in this neighborhood. The Delmore was the first to get started and coal was shipped from there on Friday. The United mine, of the Hanna Furnace company opened Saturday and on Tuesday was shipping coal. All other mines in this immediate vicinity are now at work.

Leetonia Reporter 8-25-1922

**AT THE FURNACES**

**Cherry Valley and Grafton Repairs  
Being Rushed to Completion**

Work of erecting a new boiler house at the Hanna plant is progressing and the excavating has been completed for the new boiler house and the foundations are ready to receive the new boilers. At the McKeefrey plant repairs and improvements are about complete and it is possible that before long this furnace will again be put in blast.

Leetonia Reporter 11-1-1923

During these years of on-again, off-again iron production, we don't find any new, helpful references in the Reporter to switching operations at the McKeefrey Iron Company. It seems likely both the Erie and the PRR would have continued to serve the industry, perhaps with the involvement of the Leetonia & Cherry Valley.

McKeefrey Iron was the first to succumb to tough times. McKeefrey was unable to pay 6% interest on bonds it issued to a Pittsburgh bank in 1922. The bank sued McKeefrey Iron Co. in 1926, forcing the company into bankruptcy. A judgement was issued in favor of the bank, and assets of McKeefrey were sold at a court-ordered auction on December 1, 1926. With that, it appears iron production at the McKeefrey site ceased.

**McKEEFREY IRON CO. FACES  
SUIT IN FORECLOSURE**

An action in foreclosure has been filed in common pleas court by Billingsley & Moore of Lisbon in behalf of the People's Savings & Trust Co., of Pittsburgh, Pa., against the McKeefrey Iron Co., of Leetonia, Graham Kearney, Leetonia, the Leetonia Furnace Co., and the Hanna Furnace Co. of Cleveland.

The petition relates that the plaintiffs took over under a mortgage deed of trust, October 1, 1922, for the McKeefrey Iron Co., 700 bonds of the denomination of \$1,000 bearing 6 per cent interest, the deed covering certain real estate and property of the defendant interest located in Ohio.

Leetonia Reporter 9-3-1926

**McKeefrey Plant To Be Sold**  
On Wednesday, December 1st, Sheriff George Wright will offer at public sale at the entrance to the court house, the entire plant of the McKeefrey Iron Company at Leetonia, together with all of the holdings of the company. The entire plant has been appraised at \$275,000, and will be sold to satisfy a judgment for \$384,228.33 which was entered in common pleas court recently against the McKeefrey company and in favor of the Peoples Savings & Trust company of Pittsburgh.

Included in the sale will be the manufacturing plant of the company, the blast furnaces, casting house, machinery, rights of way, trestles and switches, all equipment and three tracts of land.

Leetonia Reporter 11-5-1926

**Sale of Plant Is Confirmed**  
The sale of the plant of the McKeefrey Iron company at Leetonia by Sheriff George Wright recently has been confirmed in common pleas court. This was an action in foreclosure instituted by the Peoples Savings & Trust company of Pittsburgh, Pa., as trustee against the McKeefrey Iron company.

A deed has been ordered prepared and a distribution of the proceeds ordered. A judgment in favor of the plaintiff against the defendant for \$702,477 61 has been rendered by the court in favor of the defendant. The plant brought less than \$200,000 when sold by Sheriff Wright.

Leetonia Reporter 12-17-1926

Iron production at the former Cherry Valley site (part of United Iron & Steel and M. A. Hanna) fared better into the 1920's. The Leetonia Reporter even published occasional optimistic articles about the future of the "Old Reliable" blast furnace at the Leetonia operation. By 1929 the Davison Iron & Coke Company acquired the Hanna operation.

**BUSINESS GOOD  
ATHANNA PLANT**

OLD RELIABLE CHERRY VALLEY  
FURNACE STEPS UP SHIP-  
PING BUSINESS

**OUTLOOK ENCOURAGING**

On May 1 Delivery for New Quarter  
Will Be Booster Four Cars  
a Day

Leetonia Reporter 4-27-1928

**WILL BLOW IN  
BEFORE XMAS**

REPAIRS ABOUT COMPLETED AT  
CHERRY VALLEY PLANT OF  
HANNA FURNACE CO.

**CAPACITY IS INCREASED**

Relining Is Completed and With Im-  
proved Equipment Added It Is  
Good Christmas News

Riding on top of the Yuletide sea-  
son comes the good news that "Old  
Reliable" will blow in on December  
20th. On October 1st this furnace  
closed down for necessary repairs.  
Many workmen from out of town were  
employed and work was speeded up  
as much as possible. On Monday,  
December 15th, the coke ovens will be  
lighted and again start producing  
coke.

Leetonia Reporter 12-12-1924

**CHERRY VALLEY  
FIRST OF WEEK**

TO BLOW-IN MONDAY OR TUES.  
DAY, IS PLAN OF  
OFFICIALS

**COKE OVENS PRODUCING**

Fires Are Lighted at Valley Plant  
on Monday—Improvements  
About Complete

Indications are now that the Cherry  
Valley plant of the Davison Iron &  
Coke company will blow-in Monday or  
Tuesday of next week. Final repairs  
and tests are being rushed to com-  
pletion. The repairs made this time  
have been very extensive and com-  
plete. In addition to relining the  
furnace from top to bottom, two new  
blowing engines have been installed  
and a complete filtering and water-  
softening plant. Improvements in the  
yards will be made after the plant is  
in operation.

Leetonia Reporter 8-2-1929

Clues on switching operations at the Cherry Valley site during the 1920's and early 1930 are scarce. Sheet 22 of the 1918 Erie Railroad valuation map contained the following note referring to trackage within the Cherry Valley complex:

*Note*

*Tracks to the United Iron & Steel Co  
are used by the Erie RR except as  
noted on certain tracks. —*

Those exceptions were typically tracks designated as belonging to the Leetonia & Cherry Valley Railroad. We also find an article in the 5-1-1924 Leetonia Reporter about a fatal accident involving the PRR shifter working within the Cherry Valley complex:

## HIGH TRESTLE LETS GO

Four Others Escape by Jumping to  
Safety—Services Will be  
Held on Saturday

A fatal accident occurred at the Cherry Valley plant of the Hanna Furnace Company about 3 o'clock on Wednesday afternoon in which two men were killed instantly and four others had narrow escapes.

The Pennsylvania shifter had just spotted some ore cars on the docks and the men were placing them over the ore bins. There were four loads and two empties. Just when two of the cars were over what is termed the "bridge" the timbers supporting the big trestle collapsed and two of the cars plunged to the bottom carrying the workmen with them. Four of the men were fortunate and jumped to safety, but Pietro Aiello and Angelo Cardamone were on the the wrong side and had no possible chance to escape and were crushed to death beneath the

So it appears the Erie Railroad, PRR and Leetonia & Cherry Valley were all involved in providing service to the Cherry Valley site during its final years.

An interesting comment about in-plant switching appears in that 12-12-1924 article about resumption of iron production at the Cherry Valley site. A new device, an electric charging car known as a "larry car" was introduced to convey ore from the ore storage area to the base of the skip hoist. While the four larry cars in this photo (being positioned by a small electric locomotive to charge coke ovens) are performing a different task than the task cited in the article, it's possible this tiny engine and four larry cars are the "device" cited in the article.

lighted and again start producing coke.

The furnace has been relined and a new steel trestle constructed. One of the new devices installed and in operation is the electric charging car, known as a larry car. The larry car conveys the ore from the trestle bins to the ore pit where it is conveyed by the skip hoist to the top of the furnace. The improvements made have added some additional tonnage to the furnace. If the proposed schedule carries through successfully it is believed "Old Reliable" will deliver the first cast Christmas morning.

Leetonia Reporter 12-12-1924



Cherry Valley Bee-Hive Coke Ovens, Town of Leetonia

Iron production at the Cherry Valley site continued to 1930, due (at least in part) to the investments in repairs and upgrades performed at the site in the late 1920's. We can find a January 1930 article in the Reporter stating the plant remained in operation, and a March article reporting a visit to the plant by a class from Leetonia High School, during which they viewed a cast being poured.

**HANNA COMPANY  
IN OPERATIONS**

**Real Estate In County Is Transferred  
To Firm Owning Furnaces**

Following the transfer of the real estate and buildings of the Hanna Furnace company at Leetonia to the Valley Furnace company, it was announced that blast furnaces of the latter interests on Neville Island, Pittsburg, Pa. and at Sharpsville, Pa., would be placed in operation as soon as repairs were completed.

The Valley Furnace company has now come into possession of all the real estate holdings of the Hanna interests at Leetonia, and operating executives from the latter plant are now at Sharpsville and Neville Island plant is operated under the name of Davidson Iron & Coke company and the latter concern is directly associated with the operation of the Leetonia and Sharpsville plants. The Leetonia furnace is now in operation.

Leetonia Reporter 1-31-1930

**—L. H. S.—  
Visit Furnace**

The History of Commerce class had the privilege of visiting the Cherry Valley furnace, Monday morning. The students of this class went the first period but due to the extreme interest, they did not return to L. H. S. until during the second period. They had the opportunity to see the completion of a cast. The trip was taken in connection with the study of the history of the iron making industry. The trip under the supervision of Mr. Nicol, proved very interesting, educational and beneficial in, that it gave the students a better conception of the iron industry and acquainted them with their home town furnace.

Leetonia Reporter 3-14-1930

The only definite date I can find of the end of iron production at the Cherry Valley site comes from a 1933 article reporting the transfer of Mr. Mossman, the Leetonia plant engineer, to another plant of Davison Iron & Coke. This article states the CV plant was idled three years earlier, about April 10, 1930. (Mossman apparently was kept on at the idle plant during those years to maintain plant components in the event iron production resumed.)

**MOSSMAN IS PROMOTED**

**Goes to Templeton Plant in Pennsylvania As Superintendent—Takes Chief Clerk**

Not heartening news to the people of this community the first of the week was the announcement that Mr. Frank Mossman has severed his connection with the Cherry Valley Iron plant here and was leaving town. Mr. Mossman has been a valued employe at the plant here the past 24 years, the last 16 of which he has been the plant engineer. The plant has been idle three years, or will be to 10th of next month. Mr. Mossman was still employed, but the news of his leaving seemed to be but a bad omen for any activity in the local plant in the near future.

Leetonia Reporter 3-31-1933

Finally, the last references we can find about any activity at the former Cherry Valley site are these two articles about an iron reclamation operation at the cintering plant in 1932-1933.

## ***Cinter Plant To Start***

A crew of men were put to work this week getting the cinter plant of the Cherry Valley plant here of the Davis Coke & Iron company ready for operation. A crew of men is also engaged in repairing and relaying the track to the cinterator. This plant reclaims iron from the flue dust, and there is quite a dump to be reclaimed. Just what this means is not certain, but it is possible the product will be shipped to the Neville Island plant. However, it will give employment to 10 or 15 men, and people of this community are hopeful that it presages the opening of the entire Cherry Valley plant here in the not distant future. The plant has been idle now more than two years.

Leetonia Reporter 9-9-1932

## ***Cintering Plant Closes***

The cintering plant of the Cherry Valley furnace, which has been in operation the past several months, ceased operations Wednesday and has closed down until further notice. The suspension throws 10 or 12 men out of work.

Leetonia Reporter 2-3-1933

With the departure of Mr. Mossman and the completion of the cintering reclamation, the last remnant of the iron industry at Leetonia fell silent.



Cherry Valley Site, 5-21-1933, View to NE.

Historic Columbiana County Facebook post by Bill Bittner, 9-8-2022