

William C. Hambley



The Pikeville Cut-Through was

the brainchild of former Mayor William C. Hambley. Hambley, a life long resident of Pikeville grew up with the intermittent flooding and congestion caused by a railroad and three major roads passing through the horseshoe shaped city on the banks of the Big Sandy River.

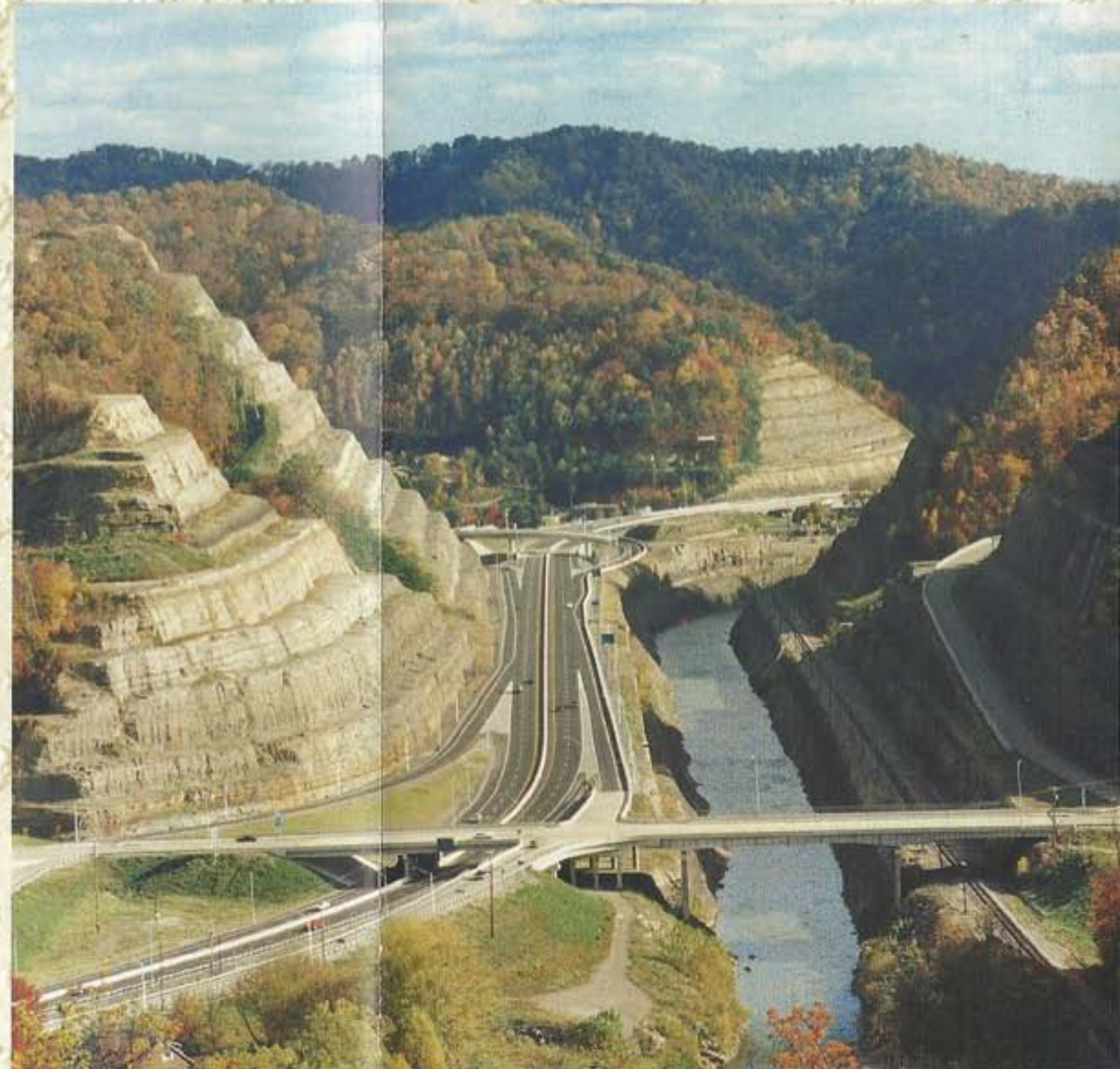
Hambley, noted physician and surgeon, became mayor in 1960, and through his perseverance and influence, over 20 federal, state, and local agencies cooperated to fulfill the Mayor's dream to improve Pikeville.

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The Pikeville Cut-Through PROJECT



The Pikeville Cut Through Project

The Cut-Through Project officially began November 1973 and was completed 14 years later at a cost of \$80 million. The project created a 3/4 mile long channel through Peach Orchard Mountain, in order to provide a path for railroad tracks, the Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River, and U.S. Highways 23, 460, 119 and KY 80.

During Phase I approximately 13 million cubic yards of rock were blasted from Peach Orchard Mountain at a cost of over 17 million dollars. When the excavation was completed, a channel was created for the Levisa Fork, allowing the river to by-pass Pikeville. Space was also provided for the railroad and a four-lane highway.



Downtown Pikeville prior to Cut-Through Project



A monument honoring Mayor Hambley has been placed in the Pikeville City Park.

The second phase began March 4, 1980 and completed December 1982. During this phase, on September 17, 1980, the Levisa Fork of the Big Sandy River was turned to flow through the Cut-Through. This portion of the project relocated the railroad and coal tipples, diverted the river through the cut-through and moved 5 million cubic yards of dirt to fill the now dry riverbed channel.

The last 2 phases began March 15, 1983. This involved completion of highway interchanges on both ends of the Cut-Through and the construction of Hambley Boulevard along the former railroad bed. An additional 150 acres of usable land resulted from these final phases.

A total of 18 million cubic yards of earth were moved during the entire project which filled the empty riverbed, creating 400 acres of usable land for the city's expansion.

The Pikeville Cut-Through is an engineering marvel and a unique example of cooperation among agencies on a federal, state and local level. It is one of the country's largest and most spectacular engineering feats. The cut itself is over 1300 feet wide, 3700 feet long and 523 feet deep. The New York Times called it "the eighth wonder of the world."



The Cut-Through Project has freed Pikeville from the floods, dust and other restrictions that plague so many other Eastern Kentucky counties. The net result is a very livable town recently included in The 100 Best Small Towns in America.